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# THE INDEPENDENT



Friday 3 October 1997

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## TODAY'S NEWS

### Police gas kills

Police forces have been warned to think again about using CS spray. An inquest jury has declared a man who died after being sprayed was unlawfully killed. This questions the safety of the spray and could lead to the policemen who used it being prosecuted. Page 4

### Pets may travel

Pets coming home from abroad may no longer have to spend six months in quarantine. They could be issued with their own passports by the end of next year, the Labour Conference was told yesterday. In another speech, Jack Straw announced that the courts will be forced to be tougher on racist crimes. Page 6

### Saudi murder mystery

As the two British nurses continue to protest their innocence of the murder of Yvonne Gilford, details of a similar killing at the same Saudi hospital have emerged. The other death shared some of the features and neither accused nurse was there at the time. In each case a security guard "went missing" afterwards. Page 3

### Green America

The US, home of the gas-guzzler, is under pressure to cut carbon emissions before world leaders meet in Kyoto for a global climate treaty. President Clinton agrees. But car-makers and oil companies are fighting back in a ferocious struggle which means America might, in the end, fail to back the treaty. Page 16

### Hurry up, say French

France now wants a "clear signal" about whether Britain will join the single currency. It hopes to get it on Monday when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, visits Paris. But France, and the other EU countries, will probably have to wait a little longer. Page 15

### Girls' fight KO'd

A 13-year-old girl due to take part in the first legal all-female boxing match has pulled out. There had been an outcry from boxers, commentators, and doctors. Emma Brammer's parents blamed media pressure: Emma herself isn't going to give up boxing. Page 8

### BT's silent huff

British Telecom has spurned the offer of talks with WorldCom, its US rival. WorldCom's surprise \$30bn takeover bid for MCI, which BT had hoped to swallow up, has left the British company reeling. BT said it didn't want to talk until MCI had decided whether to accept or reject the new bid. Page 23.

### Captain is out

Roy Keane, the Manchester United captain is out for the rest of the season after damaging ligaments in his right knee during Saturday's clash with Leeds. So will the club be looking around for a star replacement? No, Alex Ferguson, the manager, says he is confident Keane will make a full recovery. Sport, Pages 30, 32

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## A slaughter of girls: India acts to end the scandal of its missing 40m women



But where are her sisters? On page 5 Peter Popham reports about why the Indian government has decided to try to bribe families to keep girls, rather than aborting them or killing them after birth. There is now a huge gap between surviving boys and girls: 40-50m women are "missing" from the sub-continent

photograph Jack Wilson/Robert Harding

## Next: the end of our free health service?

A winter crisis looms in hospitals across the country as a groundswell of opinion grows behind the idea of charging patients for their treatment. Yesterday, doctors' leaders began to 'think the unthinkable'.

Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, asks if we are looking at the end of free care by the NHS.

Britain's doctors will next week peer over the precipice and contemplate the prospect of a National Health Service for which patients have to pay.

Pay for visits to the doctor, "hotel charges" for patients to cover the cost of bed and board in hospitals, and charges to prescription charges. We may also end up paying for other services such as X-rays, hospital tests and immunisations.

Sandy Macara, British Medical Association chairman, said yesterday that as the NHS moved on to a "war footing" to cope with the expected surge in emergencies this winter, NHS trusts were already stopping routine surgery. "We don't like doing it [considering the introduction of charges] but we have to think the unthinkable in what is clearly a crisis situation," he said.

The council of the BMA has approved a report, to be published next week, which examines in detail the impact of charging patients, including the level at which fees might be set, what they would cost to collect and what they could be expected to raise. The controversial document, which would undermine a founding principle of the NHS if implemented, comes

as health experts say charging may be the least unacceptable way of bridging the funding gap between what the NHS needs and what the Government, through tax revenues, can afford to pay.

The findings of the report are likely to be seized on by Treasury ministers who are conducting a comprehensive review of Government spending which is examining charging among other measures for raising extra funds. Last June, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, refused to rule out the possibility of new NHS charges although he later insisted that any proposal from the review would have to meet Labour's manifesto commitment that access to the NHS

Evidence from a survey of 24 OECD countries shows that the UK imposes among the lowest charges for basic medical care in the western world. Only Canada, Spain and Greece share the UK's reluctance to make patients pay.

Jennifer Dixon, a health policy analyst at the Kings Fund, the independent think-tank, said the survey showed that even egalitarian nations with publicly funded health systems such as the Scandinavian countries charged more than the UK.

In Norway, it cost the equivalent of \$11 US dollars to see a GP, \$16 to see a specialist and \$11 for an X-ray at the time of the survey in 1992. Patients paid 25 per cent of the cost of drugs up to a maximum of \$43. Similar charges were levied in Sweden and Finland.

Dr Dixon said: "We are quite unusual here. But why penalise the sick when taxes are cheap to collect? It would be inefficient and unfair."

Professor Chris Ham, director of the Health Services Management Centre at Birmingham University, said imposing patient charges would be highly sensitive and very unpopular but it had to be part of the debate about the future funding of health care. "The challenge for the Government would be how to reconcile charging with its stated intent to reduce health inequalities and increase access for the poor and chronically sick," he said.

Yesterday, the BMA said its official policy remained against charging. However, at the annual conference of GPs last June one in three voted in favour of charges.

"We are a democratic organisation and it will be for our members to tell us what they think," said Mr Macara. "I cannot believe we would change our position but we might be forced to do so."

BY JEREMY LAURANCE

would be based on need and not ability to pay.

Experts point out that charging has already been introduced for dental care, eye tests and long term care for the elderly - all of which are now largely paid for by patients - with little public protest. Although raising funds through taxation is the cheapest and simplest option it is widely seen as politically impossible.

The idea of imposing new NHS charges was floated in a report, *Healthcare 2000*, chaired by former NHS chief executive Sir Duncan Nichol, published in 1995. Although widely criticised at the time, senior members of the Audit Commission, the NHS watchdog, now privately believe that charging may be the only way for the NHS to make ends meet.

## Zinfandel?

Wasn't he an Astronaut?



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The British nurses in Saudi Arabia were offered hope after the revelation that a similar murder took place at the same hospital in 1994. Speculation mounted that the same person may have been responsible for both.

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Birmingham is to be the site of Britain's second-tallest skyscraper as part of a £300m scheme, developers disclosed.

### 6/ANIMALS

Britain's quarantine laws are to be reformed under a government green paper published yesterday. The six-month stay in kennels required by current legislation would be replaced by "pet passports" and vaccinations.

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The resignation of Lord Gowrie as Arts Council chairman has thrown the future of the organisation into doubt.

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After a week of news management and damage limitation, Anthony Bevis, Political Editor, analyses the role of the spin-doctor at the Labour Conference.

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Brewers and pubs are secretly pumping air into beer, claims a report by the Good Pub Guide. Glenda Cooper, Consumer Affairs Correspondent, investigates the Great Beer Rip-Off.

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With the Kyoto Conference due to be held in Bonn later this month, the US is under pressure to match Europe's reduction in carbon emissions.

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Steve Collins, World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight champion, stunned the sport by announcing his retirement.

### Ruth Picardie service

A memorial service celebrating the life of the *Independent*'s former journalist Ruth Picardie will be held on Monday 6 October at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1, at 11am. Ruth, who died of cancer last week, leaving a husband and two young twins, was one of the best and most widely loved journalists we had.



## PEOPLE



### Millionairess gives West End a new lease of life

Janet Holmes a Court, the Australian millionairess who owns 10 West End theatres, is on a mission to make them people-friendly. Yesterday she completed the latest phase in the £20m refurbishment of Stoll Moss Theatres, when a £1m renovation at the Lyric Theatre saw the cosy foyer's silver-leaf ceilings and wood paneling restored, new seats with added leg room for the audience, and a removal of the flock wallpaper in the auditorium and its replacement with a painted deer maroon.

It is too glib to say that Mrs Holmes a Court, the executive chairman of Stoll Moss Theatres, has brought a woman's eye to theatre. But, without question, the changes she has instigated have all been aimed at making theatre-going a more comfortable experience.

"Some of these buildings have been extremely badly neglected for decades," she said. "I think theatre-goers have been getting a rough deal. I noticed immediately there was a problem with women's lavatories. Here at the Lyric we had a gents' toilet which had 16 positions and a ladies' toilet with

two. And it doesn't compute. We've swapped that round. Now the ladies have 10 cubicles and the gents have two. Before, ladies had to make a decision at the interval whether to have a drink or spend the whole time queuing."

The Lyric, the oldest theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue, had takeaway Indian restaurant flock wallpaper, which is very nice in an Indian restaurant, but not in an 1888 theatre. And people are four inches taller now than they were in 1888. I noticed the lack of leg room in West End theatre the moment I came here. We've put in contoured seating with much better leg room."

The widow of the Australian businessman Robert Holmes a Court, who died of a heart attack in 1990, Mrs Holmes a Court is relishing playing a far more active role in the Stoll Moss empire than her late husband.

The empire includes flagships like the London Palladium and the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, as well as the bulk of Shaftesbury Avenue, and a massive cattle business back in Australia.

David Lister Arts News Editor

### Diana bodyguard set to return home

Trevor Rees-Jones, only survivor of the accident which killed Diana, Princess of Wales, is expected to leave hospital in Paris shortly and go home to Britain.

Meanwhile, evidence emerged suggesting a second car was involved in the accident. Earlier yesterday Mr Rees-Jones, 29, had a second interview with detectives investigating the crash on 31 August.

But the bodyguard, who suffered head and chest injuries, is suffering from partial and possibly temporary amnesia. It is understood Judge Hervé Stephan, leading the criminal investigation into the accident, has no objection in him leaving France, suggesting investigators have little hope he will recover his memory in the near future.

It was hoped Mr Rees-Jones might be able in shed light on the role of photographers pursuing the Mercedes and say whether, as now suspected, there was a glancing collision with a slower-moving car. Parts of the tail light of a Fiat Uno were found near the crash scene. It emerged yesterday that paint samples taken from a graze on the right side of the Mercedes were also from a Fiat Uno.

John Lichfield

### 'Brookside' lesson was too much for teachers

David Blunkett has learned the hard way. Ask a soap opera for help promoting your education crusade and don't be surprised if the result is a little raunchier than the Open University.

In response to a request from the education and employment secretary, Channel 4's *Brookside* agreed to introduce a storyline involving teaching to its mix of drama and social comment. Perhaps unfortunately for Mr Blunkett, the character chosen to illustrate the theme is Jimmy Corkill, the soap's resident ne'er do well, who has bluffed his way on to a teacher-training course using falsified qualifications.

The development so alarmed the Teacher Training Agency, responsible for maintaining the image of the profession, that it has written to *Brookside* producer Ric Mellis urging sensitivity in the treatment of "the teacher-training issue".

The letter, from TTA head of communications Dorian Jabri, appeals to the soap's producers as "responsible film-makers" to remember that "teaching is one of the most important professions in the country".

Lucy Word, Education Correspondent

## UPDATE

### HEALTH

#### Soya clue to cancer prevention

Soya products, fruit, vegetables and flax seed may ward off breast cancer, according to research. It is a diet that may turn out to be the strongest protective factor yet discovered against the disease. Scientists believe they have identified an element in the regime which may reduce the risk of breast cancer up to fourfold.

A comparison of two groups found that those who ate a diet rich in phyto-oestrogens, a group of naturally occurring chemicals derived from plants, were much less likely to develop the disease. Phyto-oestrogens are similar to the hormone oestrogen and are found mainly in soya products and the fibre present in whole grains, berries, fruit, vegetables and flax seed. Researchers have long known that diet plays a part in breast cancer based on evidence that women who migrate from countries where the disease is rare, such as Japan, to those where it is common, such as the US, increase their risk as they adopt the lifestyle of the host country.

Researchers at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre in Perth, Western Australia, interviewed 144 women with newly diagnosed breast cancer and compared them with the same number of controls. They tested their urine for a range of phyto-oestrogens and similar compounds called lignans and found high levels were associated with a substantial reduction in risk of the disease.

— Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor

### EDUCATION

#### Maths claims do not add up

Government claims that maths standards in primary schools are rising were challenged yesterday by research suggesting there has been no improvement for eight years. Researchers at Manchester University say their study shows maths standards have remained stable despite billions spent on the national curriculum since its introduction in 1989. Some pupils may even be being held back, they claim.

The report questions the reliability of national curriculum tests, the present means of judging the standard of maths. According to those tests, which can be adjusted to reflect changes in the national curriculum, 44 per cent of 11-year-olds reached expected standards in 1995, rising to 54 per cent in 1996 and 62 per cent this year. The research, published in today's *Times Educational Supplement*, challenges the Government's pledge that by the end of this parliament, in 2002, three out of four 11-year-olds will be competent in maths.

Researchers looked at maths results achieved by six- and 11-year-olds in five schools in one local education authority over the last eight years. They used the same simple tests throughout the period of the study.

Lucy Word, Education Correspondent

### DRUG BUDGET

#### Row over cholesterol treatment

The National Health Service Executive is accused today of issuing misleading guidance to health authorities and GPs on the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Health economists at the University of York and at Warwickshire health authority say the national guidance calls for a level of treatment that is unachievable, fails to state the likely benefits and ignores the question of cost effectiveness. In the *British Medical Journal*, the authors say that in Warwickshire's case, the use of such drugs in line with the guidance would cost £8m, one fifth of the total drugs budget. They say the NHS Executive's advice is "simply inadequate."

— Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor

### TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.142	Italy (lira)	2742
Austria (schillings)	19.53	Japan (yen)	192.91
Belgium (francs)	57.42	Malta (lira)	0.611
Canada (\$)	2.167	Netherlands (guilder)	3.12
Cyprus (pounds)	0.88	Norway (kroner)	11.24
Denmark (kroner)	10.64	Portugal (escudos)	281.34
France (francs)	9.34	Spain (pesetas)	234.44
Germany (marks)	2.78	Sweden (kroner)	11.98
Greece (drachmae)	442.44	Switzerland (francs)	2.29
Hong Kong (\$)	12.10	Turkey (lira)	2685.02
Ireland (pounds)	1.07	USA (\$)	1.57

Source: Thomas Cook

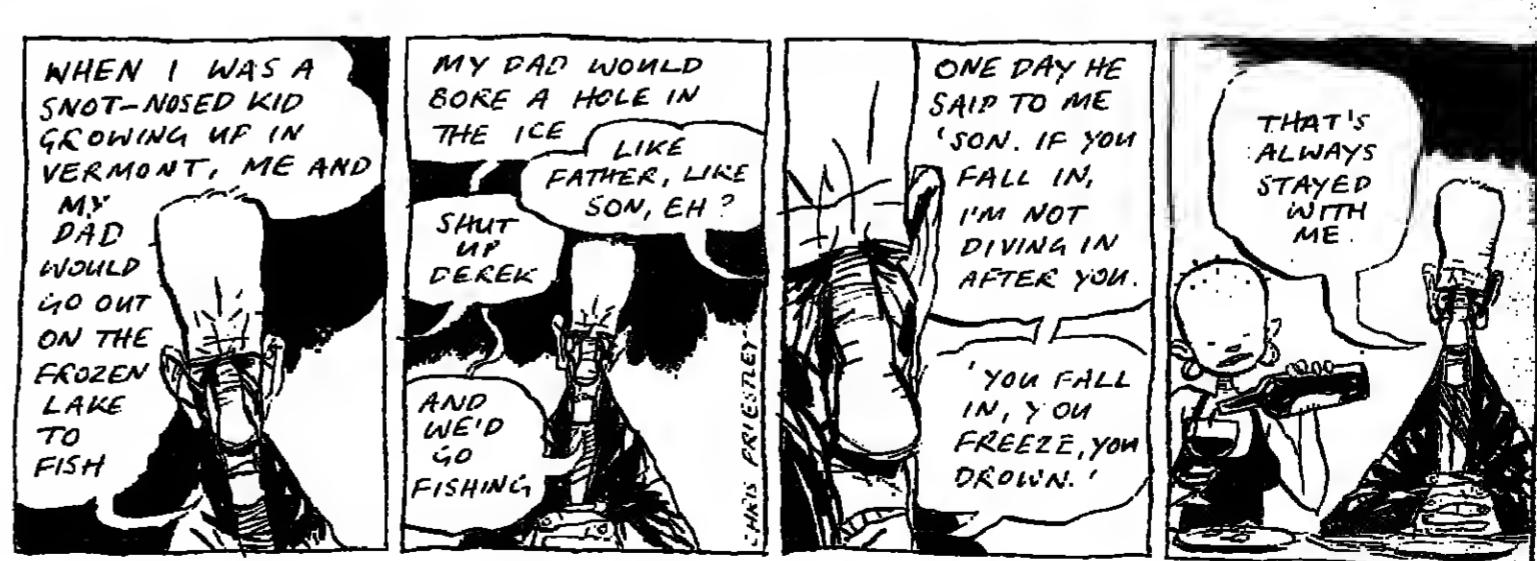
by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

### ZITS



by Chris Priestley

### 7.30 FOR 8



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# 3/LEADING STORIES

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## New doubt raised as nurse tells of second murder at Saudi hospital

Details are emerging of the murder of a second nurse at the hospital where Yvonne Gilford was beaten and stabbed. While Deborah Parry and Lucille McLaughlin protest their innocence over her killing, Steve Bogom examines chilling similarities between the two murders.

When they found Liberty de Guzman, she had been beaten, strangled, stabbed and left for dead in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre in Dhahran.

It is a case the Saudis do not like to talk about. When *The Independent* asked about it a week ago, no details were forthcoming. No one at the hospital would discuss it; neither would Saudi journalists.

Yesterday, however, a nurse who used to work at the hospital came forward and told how Mrs de Guzman met her death in similar circumstances to Yvonne Gilford. Furthermore, she described how Mrs de Guzman's husband was arrested for her murder and was later found dead in a prison cell.

Incredibly, he was supposed to have committed suicide by repeatedly hanging his head on a washbasin.

The murder, in 1994, was described by Sharon Markula, 28, who now lives in Brisbane, Australia. She spoke out following a television programme in which Rosemary Kidman, another nurse who had worked in Saudi Arabia, announced – without any hard evidence – that she believed Deborah Parry, 38, and Lucille McLaughlin, 31, had killed 55-year-old Ms Gilford last December.



Murder victim Yvonne Gilford: 'Her death is like a copycat killing'

However, far from throwing her weight behind Ms Kidman's assertion, she gave details of a theory of her own – one which had at least some evidence to support it.

In an interview with Scotland's *Daily Record*, Ms Markula, who worked at the hospital for two years, said that Ms Gilford, a fellow Australian, had been harassed by security guards in the weeks before her death; so had Mrs de Guzman.

She said both women had received large amounts of pay before they were murdered. Both had been beaten and stabbed; Mrs de Guzman, a Filipina, was strangled, Ms Gilford was suffocated. And she claimed that a security guard had "gone missing" shortly after each death.

"The British girls are innocent – a killer is still on the loose," she said. "I always thought the murderer would strike again. Yvonne's death is like a copycat killing. It has to be the same person who's responsible."

Lawyers acting for the British nurses have imposed a news blackout while they negotiate over "blood money" with Frank Gilford, Ms Gilford's brother.

Ms McLaughlin has already been found guilty and sentenced to eight years in prison and 500 lashes but Ms Parry still awaits her fate. If she is found guilty of "intentional murder", Mr Gilford's acceptance of blood money will prevent her being headed.

Sources close to the nurses say the lawyers were aware of the case and were shocked by it. But they were refused permission to refer to it or to present any other evidence at the women's trial.

Ms Markula, 28, said Ms de Guzman's husband was arrested for her murder and died six weeks later. Staff at the hospital did not believe he killed her as he was at the compound security gate at the time of the murder.

"Liberty was living in fear because her room had been broken into twice," said Ms Markula. "She was terrified because only the security guards had a copy of the room key. Someone had got in and left a cigarette butt in her kitchen. It was like a calling card to warn her she was being watched. The same thing happened to Yvonne and she was keeping a diary of the break-ins and weird phone calls before she died."

Ms Markula said staff at the hospital understood that a bank card supposedly taken from Ms Gilford's room and used after her murder actually went missing a month before she was killed.

Senior officials at the Saudi Arabian embassy in London denied knowledge of Ms de Guzman's murder yesterday.

A written request for further information was ignored.

Corporate staff bank on giving time to charitable cause



Team spirit: Goldman Sachs staff and youngsters head for the tape during sports day at Burgess Park adventure playground. Photograph: Tom Pilston

Every employee of the investment bank Goldman Sachs will be given a day off this month to do charity work. Clare Garner joined a group of bankers, including the chairman, Peter Sutherland, at a sports day in south London.

The thank you card designed by the children read: "Thank you Golden Sacks", and the impromptu play at lunchtime told the story of Mr and Mrs Smith, whose lives were transformed by "a company down the road".

The company in question was not the friendly corner

shop, but rather, the multi-billion dollar investment bank, Goldman Sachs. The bankers who normally spend every working hour slaving for £1m Christmas bonuses had hung up their Savile Row suits and switched off their mobiles for a day. Everyone, from secretary to chairman, was in the grip of a sudden gust of corporate compassion. Instead of buy, buy, buy, it was give, give, give.

To the 10, 11, and 12-year-olds who participated in Goldman Sachs' sports day, it was a PE paradise. For the first time in their lives, they had skipping ropes, hurdles, space hoppers, footballs, basketballs and netball posts – plus adults who wanted to play with them. "They [the adults] were kind to us," said Abi, nine. "They never shouted at us."

This is, perhaps, more of a compliment than it sounds. Many of these children suffer routine abuse, neglect and violence at the hands of adults and, were it not for Kid's Company, the Southwark-based charity which hosted the sports day, they might well give up.

Their teachers were astounded – not so much by the range of games and quality of equipment, but by the change in their behaviour. "The kids are responding so well," said Robbie Devlin, a fifth form teacher. "Darren has been refusing to come to class lately. Today, he's like a different boy. I'd say this has been a revolutionary experience for these children – to discover that there are adults that are interested in them."

The screams of exhilaration in Burgess Park adventure

playground in Southwark, could be heard from some distance. On drawing closer, it became clear that the bankers were making as much noise as the children. They willed their team to win and ran for their life – as if their next multi-billion deal depended on the outcome of the egg and spoon race.

There were six teams and each team member wore a T-shirt with a letter from the word "United" on it. On their backs was a word: "U" stood for "Understanding", "N" for "Nation", "I" for "International", "T" for "Trust", "E" for "Equal" and "D" for "Determination".

Goldman Sachs has not sought publicity for its charity work. A spokesman said that the scheme was dual-purpose: to give something back to communities and cement the company's strong team spirit, and added: "We are not unique in doing this." But what is unique, is the scheme's global scale. Seven thousand five hundred of the bank's 10,000 world-wide staff have signed up for a day's charity work this month. There are 1,250 volunteers from the London office alone.

One young investment banker, who was practising his golf swing in the courtyard, said he was glad of the opportunity. "My work is quite intense, with long hours and a lot of travelling... You lose focus on things like this. It's good to get a proper balance on reality because, as you know, the City isn't always the most real place."

Donations to Kid's Company can be sent to: 40 Barforth Road, Nunhead, London, SE15 3PS.

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UNSUBSCRIBED



## Rupees handout may save the lost daughters of India

India has 40 million fewer women than it would have, if the sexual balance had been left to nature. What has happened to this population the size of that of England and Wales? Most were aborted; many were killed after birth. An anxious government now plans to reward couples for having daughters. Peter Popham asks if it can change the course of a horrifying battle of the sexes.

The Indian government chose yesterday, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and a national holiday, to launch a modest 720 million rupee (£12.4m) scheme to give the daughters of the nation's poorest families hope of a better start in life.

Families throughout the country earning less than 11,000 rupees (£190) per year and who produce a daughter will be rewarded with a payment of 500 rupees – rather less than £9. They will also get financial incentives to encourage them to send their daughters to school.

The reasons the government has stepped in are brutally simple. The arrival of a daughter can be a financial disaster. A male heir is needed to carry on the family name. A girl, by contrast, is considered "another family's wealth", and the demands for a big dowry, though forbidden by the Anti-Dowry Act, can often ruin poorer families or those with several daughters.

The dowry threat induces many families to forestall the problem in more or less barbaric ways. In parts of poor states like Bihar, there are still said to be midwives who specialise in strangling girl babies at birth. Elsewhere women go to respectable clinics for the amniocentesis test, ostensibly used to test for genetic defects, but in India almost invariably to check the baby's sex. If it's a girl, abortion often follows soon afterwards.

The government says that in a study of 8,000 abortions carried out after amniocentesis in Bombay, 7,999 of the foetuses were female. In this way India's traditional imbalance between the sexes has got

worse: in 1901 there were 972 females for every 1,000 males, but 90 years on there were only 927. Three years ago sex determination tests were banned by law, but they continue unabated.

Supposing the daughter makes it out of the womb, her prospects are still poor compared to those of her brothers. In the countryside, even if boys go to school the girls are likely to be kept behind to help in the house – which helps to account for the fact that female illiteracy is 60 per cent, while male is 35 per cent.

The woes continue into adulthood, with the dowry burden and related terrors: the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) reported recently that 5,000 Indian women every year are burned to death by their in-

### THE MISSING MILLIONS

The Indian government announced a ban on tests to determine whether an expectant mother is carrying a boy or a girl after census-takers recorded an alarming drop in India's female population. World-wide, for every 100 men, there are 105 women; in India, the average fell to 93 women for every 100 men, but in some regions there are fewer than 85 per 100.

Unicef, in a recent report, stated: "There is perhaps no more shameful statistic than the fact that some 40 to 50 million girls and women are 'missing' from the Indian population." One Bombay hospital that carried out sex tests on foetuses asked patients to report back if they had undergone abortions and whether the foetus was a boy or a girl. Social workers discovered that, for every aborted male, there were 1,000 aborted females.

Female infanticide was banned by the British in India back in 1870, but the practice persists. It is not only the poor who resort to infanticide.

Unicef contends that in Haryana and Punjab, two rich farming states, the ratio is about 87 women to 100 men.

laws in retribution for their families' failure to provide sufficient dowry.

However, the government scheme is flawed because it is in the poorest parts of the countryside, where it could do most good, that corruption is rife and the money is likely to end up in the wrong hands.

Even if it goes to families with baby girls, there is no way of ensuring that it is the baby girls who will benefit. Boys, it is still almost universally believed, matter more.

It is nevertheless a first step, the first

time after years of worthy talk that the Indian government has put a little money

where its mouth is. "In India we've been

talking about the girl-child for a decade,

about the necessity of upliftment," said

Vanita Nathan, director of a private or-

ganisation involved with gender issues in

poor villages near the capital.

"But this is the first time the authori-

ties have pledged money."

Historically the position of women in Hindu society was extremely grim, from uncertain birth to a fiery death in *sati* on the funeral pyre of the lord and master. *Sati* was abolished in the 19th century (though a case of an attempted *sati* was reported in Rajasthan just last week). But in many other respects the position of women has hardly advanced at all. "If a boy is born, there is happiness," explains the govern-

ment's advertisement launching the scheme in today's *Hindustan Times*. "If a girl is born, there is sorrow."

Against this great wall of prejudice and discrimination, the government's new scheme could well have all the impact of a peashooter. But women who work on the girl-child problem in poor communities gave it a cautious welcome yesterday. "If the moocly reaches the people it's meant to reach in the interior," said Vanita Nathan, "it will be useful. In a city like Delhi, 500 rupees means nothing. In the interior it is significant. But it's only a step. We also need a proper educational infra-

structure in the interior: proper schools and teachers and incentives to motivate people to send their children to school."

But for these good things to happen, the first battle has to be won in the womb. And for this, the government's new scheme may tilt the odds slightly in favour of the girl child's survival.



One that got away: A family of migrant workers camping under a film star's poster in Bombay

Photograph: Pamela Singh/FSP

## China takes on parental prejudice

"Mothers, take your daughters back home!" read one headline in a Chinese newspaper over a story about two abandoned baby girls. There are no direct financial incentives in China on offer for families which embrace their unwanted female children, but there has been an intense propaganda campaign over recent years to persuade parents that a girl is as much a blessing as a boy.

In the cities where the one child policy is strictly imposed, prejudice against girls has eased. But in the countryside the preference for male children is often overwhelming, and new wives live in dread of bearing female children. Sex-selective abortions are still reported to be widespread, with high technology coming to the service of traditional customs. In even relatively backward areas, hospitals have ultrasound scanners which allow expectant mothers to determine the sex of the foetus, although the central government outlawed this practice in 1995.

At worst, prejudice results in the death by neglect and abandonment of girls when they are born. But many girls are simply not registered at birth, and sent to distant relatives, so that the couple can try for a boy. In the early 1990s, all these factors contributed to a sex ratio birth imbalance of around 117 boys born to every 100 girls.

In many rural areas, the biggest shift in policy has been to allow couples to have a second child without penalties, so long as the birth are spread by five years and planned under the quota system. Those who press ahead without permission and have extra children can still be heavily penalised.

Chinese family planning policy has also shifted to offer farmers "economic favours" if they abide by China's family planning rules – regardless of a child's sex. In the countryside, family planning is supposed to be integrated with rural development projects and schemes to increase farmers' incomes. Rural households which obeyed family planning rules are supposed to be given priority in getting loans, materials, technical assistance, and social welfare from the local government. But the reforms further penalise the poorest families which have too many children.

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## Trust vote keeps ban on stag hunting

Stag hunting with hounds will stay banned on National Trust land. The trust's decision last night will boost the campaign to ban fox hunting over its next few crucial months, explains **Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent.**

When the National Trust decided that stag hunting was cruel and unjustifiable earlier this year, those who had long fought all hunting with hounds sensed victory was near. A huge conservative and countryside-loving organisation with more than 2 million mostly middle-class members had finally seen the light.

The trust's decision in April followed research commissioned from a leading animal behaviour expert at Cambridge University. After a two-year study, Professor Patrick Bateson concluded that pursuit by dogs and people on horseback was grossly stressful, exhausting and agonising for the red deer of Devon and Somerset.

The council swiftly agreed and banned stag hunting – but not fox hunting – on all of its land. The move came as Labour was sweeping to victory during the election campaign with a manifesto pledge to allow a free vote in Parliament on banning all hunting with hounds.

So the tide seemed to be running strongly in favour of the abolitionists. But then six people representing the stag hunters and National Trust tenants mounted a legal challenge,

seeking a judicial review against the trust's decision.

Meanwhile, Labour's commitment to providing enough parliamentary time for a Private Member's Bill banning hunting to be passed came into question. And in the summer the pro-hunting lobby mounted a huge rally against that Bill in Hyde Park in central London.

The High Court judge at the judicial review hearing in August said the trust's original decision had been "rushed to say the least". Mr Justice Robert Walker refused the pro-hunters an injunction which would allow hunting to resume on trust land, but said the trust's council should think again.

All through yesterday afternoon the trust did – and then stuck with the ban, unanimously.

In a statement afterwards, the trust said it had carefully considered criticisms of its earlier decision and gone over all the factors involved. It accepted that deer have to be culled in the absence of natural predators, but believes shooting them is far more humane.

Yesterday, the animal welfare groups backing the anti-hunting Bill welcomed the reaffirmation of the ban. "The hunters have been desperate to criticise Professor Bateson's report," said Graham Sir, of the League Against Cruel Sports.

The report will be used to support MP Michael Foster's anti-hunting Bill, which receives its crucial second reading in the House of Commons at the end of November. But the professor himself has said that just because stags suffer agonies in being hunted, it does not prove foxes do, too.



No Trust Members of the Quantock Stag Hunt, who have had to find new ways of pursuing their activities

Photograph: David Rose

## Pet passports may replace rabies laws

**Britain's tough anti-rabies laws could be replaced by passports for pets, immunisation and micro-chips by the end of 1998. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says that Lord Rothermere and Chris Patten will be pleased.**

Animal welfare groups led by the RSPCA yesterday warmly welcomed the first step towards replacing Britain's six-month quarantine requirements for pets with an updated system of "pet passports" backed up by compulsory vaccination against rabies.

The Government Green Paper published yesterday said the new checks could be in place in late 1998, if action is agreed.

There was heavy briefing that no decision had been reached, but ministers are expected to opt for legislation requiring pets to be vaccinated against rabies, the use of micro-chip implants to identify the animals, blood tests and certificates to prove they are clear of the deadly viral disease.

It could enable travellers heading for European Union countries such as France and

Italy to take their pets with them on holiday for the first time. The cost of the new checks would be borne by pet owners, but it could prove cheaper and less stressful for pets and their owners than holding the animals in quarantine kennels for six months, which can cost up to £1,200 per pet.

Announcing the consultation paper, Jack Cunningham, the agriculture minister, told the

Labour Party conference in Brighton that no changes would be introduced unless they were as effective in combating rabies as the present system.

"It is time to take a fresh look at our quarantine laws," said Dr Cunningham, a dog lover himself. "But any new system must be at least as effective in protecting the British people as the system we have had in place for most of this century."

## Activist locks herself in safe

A woman animal-rights protester was continuing to defy bailiffs' attempts to remove her after spending her second night shut in a steel safe underground.

The 24-year-old woman, who calls herself "Greta", is the last of 20 demonstrators who occupied a camp in a small wood outside the gates of Huntingdon Life Sciences chemical research centre near Huntingdon, Cambs. Bailiffs and police moved in to clear the camp early on Tuesday after HLS obtained a High Court eviction order last week.

Several demonstrators had to be cut free after chaining themselves to iron bars embedded in the ground or attaching themselves to a tree.

Greta, who says she has water but no food, moved into the 5ft by 3ft steel safe when bailiffs arrived and said she would move into an underground tunnel if need be.

Cambridgeshire Under-Sheriff Herbert Robertson said his staff were working slowly to ensure that she was not hurt. Oxygen was being pumped in. The laboratories have been a target for the animal rights movement for many years.

There has been renewed focus on the company since a Channel 4 documentary in March.

Two workers, who have now left the company, admitted cruelty and were given community service orders by magistrates as a result of the documentary.

The Home Office has warned the company that it could lose its licence if standards were not improved.



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## SODEXHO ALLIANCE AND MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC. TO MERGE THEIR FOOD SERVICE AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT BUSINESSES IN NORTH AMERICA.

\* SODEXHO ALLIANCE and MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. announced they have entered into a definitive agreement to combine SODEXHO's North American operations (SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA) with MARRIOTT's food service and facilities management business (MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES).

The combined company, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES, Inc. will be the largest provider of food and facilities management services in North America, with over 4,800 accounts and annual sales in excess of USD 4 billion. It is expected to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

The merger between SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA and MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES is expected to be completed in early 1998.

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL shareholders will own 51 percent (with as main shareholder the Marriott family holding approximately 10 percent) and SODEXHO ALLIANCE 49 percent of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES.

Both Pierre BELLON, Chairman and Chief Executive officer of SODEXHO ALLIANCE and J.W. MARRIOTT, Jr, Chairman and Chief Executive officer of MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. said they expect the planned transaction to create significant value for their stakeholders.

"SODEXHO ALLIANCE, already leader in the European market, also reinforces its worldwide leadership" said Pierre BELLON, "We have been seeking to expand our presence in the attractive North American market. MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES is an excellent strategic fit for us and we are excited about the growth opportunities created by the merger. Both organizations share a commitment to exceptional customer service, shareholder value creation, commitment and opportunity for our people".

"The merger provides MARRIOTT shareholders an ongoing stake in a strong and well focused contract services company with excellent growth prospects", commented J.W. MARRIOTT. "With the industry consolidating and becoming increasingly global, we are extremely pleased to be aligned with SODEXHO ALLIANCE, one of the largest and most successful contract services organizations in the world".

### \* SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES, Inc.

The company will have an 8 member Board:

- 2 nominated by MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. including William SHAW, President and Chief Operating Officer of MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc.,
- 3 nominated by SODEXHO ALLIANCE, including Pierre BELLON,
- Charles D. O'DELL, currently President of MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES,
- 2 independent American Directors selected jointly by the remainder of the Board.

William SHAW will serve as Non Executive Chairman of the Board. Charles D. O'DELL will become President and Chief Executive and Michel LANDEL, currently President and Chief Executive Officer of SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA, will become Executive Vice-President of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES. Charles D. O'DELL and Michel LANDEL said "SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will be the top provider of contract services to the corporate, healthcare and education markets in

North America. Our clients will benefit from the combination of the best food programs and operating systems of the two separate companies, as well as the broader range of value-added services we will be able to provide".

They are confident that, as a result of the merger, employees of both MARRIOTT MANAGEMENT SERVICES and SODEXHO NORTH AMERICA will see enhanced career development opportunities.

"SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will be well positioned to grow at above-average rates", explained Michel LANDEL, "We expect to capture a major share of new business as more organizations recognise the cost savings and performance gains we can help them achieve through outsourcing". Additionally, Charles D. O'DELL noted "joining with worldwide leader SODEXHO ALLIANCE should create synergies that will enhance our competitiveness and accelerate our growth".

"SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES will have considerable appeal to investors" confided Charles D. O'DELL. "This will be a highly focused company with a leadership position in a growing industry. In addition, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES should increase its profitability through sharing best practices, combining resources and systems integration".

On a proforma basis for the fiscal year ended January 3, 1997, SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES would have had sales of USD 4.1 billion and earnings before interest expense, income taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of USD 233 million.

Following the merger, total debt of SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES is expected to be USD 1.25 billion.

For SODEXHO ALLIANCE, financing of this transaction will be accompanied by a capital increase of approximately FF 2 billion (USD 330 million).

This rights issue to shareholders will be launched shortly and the Bellon Group has indicated its intention to fully subscribe for its share of such issue. SODEXHO ALLIANCE will consolidate SODEXHO MARRIOTT SERVICES in its financial statements. The Group will employ more than 212,000 staff with sales on a 12 months proforma basis of around FF 55 billion (USD 9.1 billion).

As a consequence of its stable and predictable cash flow, SODEXHO ALLIANCE will rapidly recover its investment capacity. In 3 years, interest cover should be around 5 and net debt compared to adjusted net worth of around 60%.

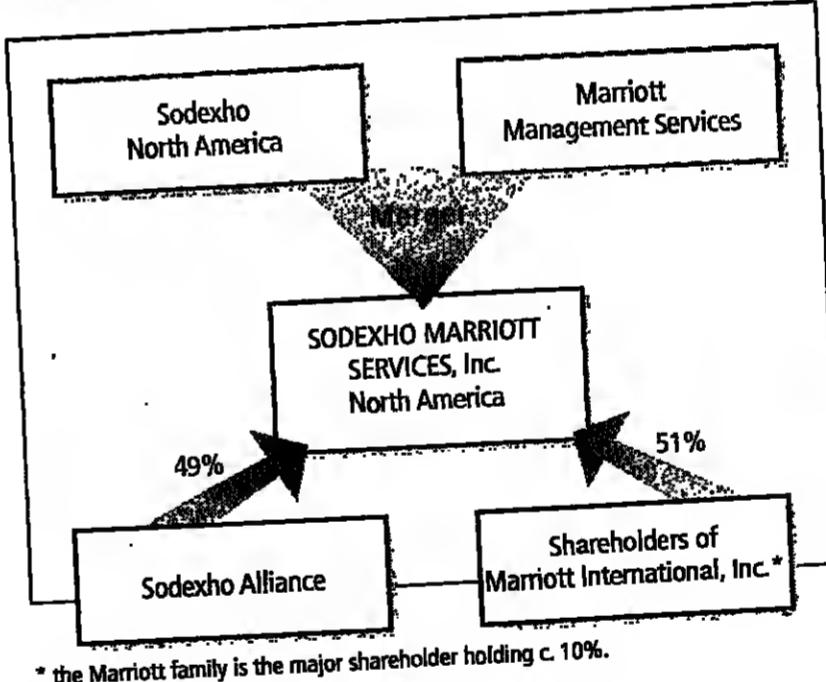
### \* Other highlights of the transaction

The definitive agreement is subject to customary conditions, including approval by MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. shareholders, receipt of an affirmative ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on the transaction structure and other regulatory approvals.

In a separate transaction, SODEXHO ALLIANCE will acquire MARRIOTT's food service and facilities management operations in the United Kingdom.

Merrill Lynch and Co. is acting as advisor to MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc. and Société Générale Securities Corporation is advising SODEXHO ALLIANCE.

### Shareholding structure after merger



### COMPANY PROFILES

#### \* MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

is the world's leading hospitality company with over 4,900 operating units in the United States and 51 other countries and territories. Major businesses include hotels operated and franchised under the Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Courtyard, Residence Inn, Fairfield, Towne Place Suites, Renaissance, New World and Ramada International brands; vacation club (timeshare) resorts, food service and facilities management of clients in business, education and health care, senior living communities and services and food service distribution. Total sales for fiscal year 1996 were USD 10.2 billion. The company is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and has approximately 225,000 employees.

#### \* SODEXHO ALLIANCE

is the world leader in food and management services. Operating in 62 countries its 142,000 employees provide services for over 13,500 units in: businesses, hospitals, schools, nursing and retirement homes, prisons and remote sites onshore and offshore throughout the world. The group is also the world's second largest Service Vouchers and Cards company with a range of products that includes restaurant, gift, gasoline, food and home services voucher, as well as medication and other cards.

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Sodexo also operates river cruises and is a partner to major international sporting events. Total sales for the SODEXHO ALLIANCE Group exceeded FRF 29 billion (USD 4.6 billion) in fiscal 1997.

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## Girl boxer pulls out of fight

A boxing match between two teenage girls was cancelled yesterday following an outcry over the Amateur Boxing Association's decision to support it. Steve Boggan says that although a battle was lost, for women boxers the war may just be starting.

In the end, it wasn't an uppercut or a jab or a haymaker that floored Emma Brammer. It was the media attention and, for a 13-year-old, there was no shame in that.

She decided to call off her historic - some would say barbaric - fight against fellow 13-year-old Andrea Prime after widespread criticism of the bout from boxers, commentators and doctors.

It would have been the first fight sanctioned by the Amateur Boxing Association following a change in its rules earlier this week. The girls would have squared up last night at a club in Stoke-on-Trent but the

growing media attention, bordering on the hysterical, proved too much for Emma.

Her father, Derek Brammer, 42, from Stoke, a life-long supporter of boxing, ended the controversy with a brief statement. "I can confirm that she has withdrawn," he said. "All the adverse publicity surrounding the match has put too much pressure on her."

"She will not be giving up boxing. That is all I am prepared to say."

The proposed fight had split the boxing community. Many, like former British heavyweight champion Henry Cooper, called for it to be banned; others, like Barry McGuigan, former featherweight champion, said it would be sexist to deny women the right to box.

The British Medical Association said simply that to allow women to fight was "demented". It would, a spokesman said, give them equal rights as men to suffer brain damage.

Rob Robertson, chairman of the Amateur Boxing Association, said he was disappointed by the decision to pull out.

"I find it very sad that a young woman

has been prevented from expressing her right to choose her sport because of some of the aggressive interviewing that has taken place. Really, she feels that the pressure is too great."

However, he said many other women were clamouring to box.

"It is not a question of us having to find women who want to take part in a match; in fact there are a thousand women in our clubs and they will do so."

"It is a misrepresentation to say it is dangerous and for one spokesman to conclude it is barbaric is a travesty and not what we know amateur boxing to be."

Andrea's father, Ken Prime, of Wigston, Leicestershire, said his daughter was "bitterly disappointed" that the fight had been cancelled. But he said he would allow her to box as long as she wanted to.

"I do not feel I have to defend myself over this," he added.

"My daughter likes boxing and while she is enjoying it I am allowing her to do it."

"If she wanted to go horse riding then I would take her horse-riding. It's just the same."



Scores of original drawings and paintings done by Harmsen Van Der Beek for Enid Blyton's Noddy books are to be auctioned at Sotheby's in London on 29 October. These two pictures are expected to fetch up to £1,500 each.

## Fishermen presumed dead as search is called off

An air and sea search for four fishermen missing in the North Sea was abandoned yesterday.

A spokesman for Aberdeen coastguards said the decision was taken after consultation with the RAF and other rescue services. "All hopes have faded ... Nothing has been sighted, just odd bits of wreckage that may or may not have come from the missing boat."

The search was launched yesterday when the Peterhead-registered vessel *Sapphire* sank in heavy seas 20 miles off the Aberdeenshire coast. Skipper Victor Robertson, 28, jumped to safety from the wheelhouse of the boat and was later winched to safety by an RAF rescue helicopter.

The search - involving two

helicopters and a flotilla of fishing boats - found no trace of his four colleagues, Adam Stephen, 29, Robert Stephen, 25, Victor Podlesny, 45, and Bruce Cameron, 32, all from Peterhead.

Mr Robertson told rescuers that the boat was hit by a massive wave as it returned to Peterhead after a three-day fishing trip.

In a statement released by Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, where he is recovering, Mr Robertson said: "I am devastated by the tragic events that overtook the *Sapphire*.

"My thoughts are with the families of my friends and colleagues ... My sincere thanks go to all members of the rescue services."

## Silent monks go fast forward into the modern world



The monks of Caldy, a tiny island two miles off the west Wales coast, are moving into the electronic age.

They're putting together a bid for Lottery cash to set up a video centre where at the press of a button the hundreds of summer visitors who make the 20-minute crossing from Tenby can see on screen life behind the monastery walls. Copies of the 20-minute video will also be on sale.

Brother Gildas, the monks' chief contact with the outside world, said yesterday: "We hear that many people have video machines and decided that this was the best way of explaining Caldy - better perhaps than pamphlets."

The 15 monks, aged between 45 and 80, are members of the Cistercian Order, a silent brotherhood where speech is restricted to essentials. They lead an austere existence, rising at 3am for the first of seven daily services, or offices as they are properly called. They retire at 8pm. Some of the monks work on the monastery farm which provides much of their vegetarian diet, while others produce perfumes made from the wild flowers carpeting the island. Tours of the monastery are strictly for men only.

— Tony Heath

## Time up for bad teachers

Teaching unions have approved plans for fast-track dismissal proceedings which will see staff who are so incompetent that they jeopardise children's education removed after four weeks if they fail to improve.

A new framework for dealing with bad teachers, heads and deputies will also ensure those failing less drastically are sacked within two terms.

The procedure, brokered by the conciliation service Acas, was formally agreed yesterday by a working party of representatives of teacher unions, local

education authorities, churches and governors.

The procedure will now be passed to schools minister Stephen Byers for approval, and is likely to be adopted nationwide. It replaces a less formal system in which each LEA has its own agreed procedures, adopted by most school governing bodies. The process can drag on for up to two years.

Doug McAvoy, leader of the National Union of Teachers, said: "This agreement offers protection for pupils and fair procedures for teachers."

## The Stroke Exhibition & Sale of Art at The Royal Festival Hall

4th - 11th October 1997

A unique exhibition of drawings, paintings and sculptures submitted by some of Britain's most established artists together with works from artists who have suffered the shattering experience of stroke.

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Further Information: The Stroke Association 01483 452941

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## Council goes in search of a future role

**Do we need the Arts Council?** Lord Gowrie's resignation as chairman may presage its demise. David Lister, Arts News Editor, finds both government and leading figures in the arts sceptical about its usefulness.

publish only a summary, not the full report, leading to speculation that it is attempting to hide criticism of itself. A spokeswoman would only say yesterday: "It is not usual for us to publish the full reports in appraisals of our clients."

It has also been criticised for handing out large sums of money to venues run by people serving on its own advisory panels.

Add to this government unease about vast tranches of lottery money being distributed by the Council to institutions such as the Royal Opera House with a narrow audience base, and one can see that, in resigning "for entirely personal reasons", Lord Gowrie may have been prescient in seeing a period of conflict not just with government but with the council's own clients. He is also said to have been at odds with members of his own council, furious about the Royal Opera House débâcle.

The Arts Council was set up at the end of the Second World War and distributes £180m of government grant to institutions ranging from the Royal Shakespeare Company down to local arts centres. It epitomises the "arm's-length principle" by which a quango runs the nation's arts, and government is not allowed to interfere directly, lest it start pronouncing on what is presented - a fear unlikely to have much basis in reality.

Raymond Gubbay, the classical music and opera promoter, said yesterday: "You just need a civil servant and a secretary on a wet Wednesday afternoon ticking off a list of arts organisations. What else does the Arts Council do? It never takes any far-reaching decisions. It's all based on precedent. The companies that have money get more money. But it's drastic far-reaching decisions that are needed in the arts."

The amount of money it distributed more than doubled when the National Lottery was set up and it became the agency for giving £250m a year to good causes in the arts.

But after years of financial crisis in the arts, failures by the council to sort out problems such as the surplus of symphony orchestras in London, or the flooding of regional theatre, respected arts figures are wondering if its existence is justified. Elected government ministers run every other area of British life. They even fund directly the big national museums such as the British Museum, National Gallery and Tate Gallery.

By what logic are the rest of the arts better served by an unelected quango? Far from increasing democratic accountability, it regularly means that when ministers are quizzed in the Commons about problems in the arts, they evade the question by saying "This is a matter for the Arts Council."

Some believe there is a need for a planning body in the arts, but not for a cash dispensing body. Colin Tweedy, director of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, said: "The days of the Arts Council being the core funder of the arts in England are numbered."

This is all part of what government and other observers see as a lack of accountability in the council, a failing that will be emphasised today when the council announces the findings of a special inquiry government charged it to set up into the Royal Opera House, but will



Viviana Durante (left) in rehearsal for the Royal Ballet production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Labatt Hammersmith Apollo theatre, one of the company's temporary homes during the refurbishment of the Royal Opera House. The setting up of these substitute venues was one of the recent controversies to dog the Arts Council under the leadership of Lord Gowrie (top left), whose likely successors when he steps down in April include David Mellor (top right), Melvyn Bragg (above left) and Baroness Smith (above right). Main Photograph: Laurie Lewis

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### DAILY POEM

#### Trepanned

by Eva Salzman

*Bad enough, not to have trekked the Himalayas or smoked a pipe in the back of a Volkswagen bus with Storm the mechanic, who, with blessings from us changed the oil and filter en route to enlightenment. Let's just say you were part of my dummer days; I turned the lights down low to cosmic bliss, I laughed at the spirit, in spirits, excited the men. A corporeal slant. And all I wanted was this:*

*one little plastic piece of that five-and-dime belief, a novelty axe to hack at the totems of numbers, on your PC screen. I wanted hand relief - that is, the gentle touch just before you go under.*

*Nothing profound, nothing deep. Which is why I let you drill that Black and Decker into my third eye.*

This week's poems come from *The Forward Book of Poetry 1998* (Forward Publishing, £7.95). It consists of short-listed work and selected other entries for this year's Forward Prizes, to be awarded on 8 October. Eva Salzman's poem appears in *Bangin' with the Watchman* (OUP), and is reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

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# 10/LABOUR CONFERENCE

## Straw pledges stiffer sentences for racial crimes

Jack Straw yesterday promised to fulfil Labour's election pledge to stamp out racial harassment. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the Home Secretary went further than expected.

The Government's war on racial harassment was stepped up with the announcement that the courts will be forced to impose harsher sentences where any crimes have a racial element.

The Crime and Disorder Bill to be introduced at the end of the year will include a provision requiring courts to regard evidence of racial hostility in any crime as an aggravating factor when sentencing. This goes further than the manifesto pledge to introduce new offences of racial harassment and racially-motivated violence which will be included in the Bill.

The Lord Chief Justice issued guidance to courts in 1995

to increase sentences where crimes included a proven racial element, after he increased unduly lenient sentences against three offenders. A survey last week by the Crown Prosecution Service showed that the advice was being followed in only one in five cases.

Mr Straw published a tariff of higher sentences requiring courts to impose prison sentences of up to two years longer for crimes where there is evidence of racial harassment or violence. It means the penalty for malicious wounding, which would normally have a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment, could rise to seven years if there was proof of racial harassment or violence.

He also raised possibility that the list of offences which will attract a higher sentence could include racial criminal damage. So offenders could face higher penalties for breaking windows in a racial attack than they would in cases of vandalism.

The law and order Bill will be wide ranging, and Mr Straw promised crime victims the

chance to confront the young thugs who offend against them.

The Association of Chief Constables (Acpo) gave the proposals a cautious welcome. Nottinghamshire's Chief Constable Colin Bailey, who chairs Acpo's race and community relations sub-committee, said: "It will be important to ensure that any new legislation does not create a counter-productive bureaucratic burden, and that standards of proof are not set at an unrealistically high level that would make the task of police and prosecutor even harder. It is reassuring to see that the consultation paper recognises these potential dangers and in particular provides for alternative verdicts should it not be possible to prove a racist element."

The Government's action on racial violence was warmly welcomed at the conference. Bill Morris, leader of the Transport & General Union yesterday called on Tony Blair to do more for racial equality by following the example of President Bill Clinton and putting more blacks in his government.



Old Labour: Lord Healey, the former chancellor, at a party in Brighton last night to celebrate his 80th birthday

Photograph: Brian Harris

### The Link

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## Banks in trouble again as critics clamour for his resignation

Tony Banks, the sports minister, scored yet another own-goal yesterday, with an interview in which he spoke of colleagues looking "like shit". The exhausted minister says he needs a break.

Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, thinks that could be arranged.



been minister than before and things are beginning to slip rather badly now."

Nevertheless, he took consolation from the appearance of some Commons colleagues, saying: "I look at my colleagues about my age and think, 'My God, I look better than them' because they probably look like shit anyway."

Mr Banks acknowledged that he would never look like some young male cover model. But he added: "At least if I am aspiring to look like that, I might at least look a little bit more like that than you know, a sort of pile of old doos, as it were, that you see some of your male colleagues look like."

He also accused some MPs of making unreasonable demands and "whingeing". "Every single day there's someone who says to me I wrote to you but I haven't got a reply yet," Mr Banks said. "Well, get in line, there's thousands of people writing. You try to prioritise ... People really feel that the only thing you are waiting for was their letter. They get very stroppy when they don't receive a reply. I just think that people like that are either sad, selfish or both."

Qualified support for Mr Banks came from Clare Short - who has also been prone to deliver embarrassing remarks - who told BBC Radio 5 Live that the foetus comment was "a horrible, dreadful joke". However, she added: "Tony is very, very funny and 19 jokes out of 20 work."

## Union in plea over minimum wage

Labour's biggest affiliate made its bid for a statutory national wage. Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, finds unions urging penalties for employers who break the law.

from the transport union, follows a row over comments on the minimum wage on Wednesday by Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio. The minister said that a lower rate "will apply" to young people, which was later amended to allow the independent commission discretion and to indicate an inferior minimum should only apply to trainees.

Mr Morris insisted that all workers over the age of 18 except those on accredited training courses. He said that it would be a tragedy if the commission was seen to be a puppet of the Government.

The Low Pay Commission was set up to be independent, not an extension of government. If it was seen as such, it would do immense damage to its credibility.

Referring to Mr Mandelson's comments at a fringe meeting, Mr Morris regretted the intervention and hoped there would be no "repetitions". Another case submitted

yesterday came from the public service union Unison which stuck to its guns that the minimum should be half male median earnings, which currently works out at £4.61 an hour. The eventual statutory limit would probably be about a £1 less.

The Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, which represents 750,000 craft workers, effectively argued that the rate should be at a modest level. The right-wing AEEU believes that a relatively high minimum would mean some of its members would need to protect their pay differentials.

It is thought that the GMB general union also argued for more than £4 - a position already adopted by the TUC leadership which is to make an oral submission on 14 October. Both the transport union and the GMB contend that a rate of around £4 would be unlikely to lead to unemployment.

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مكالمات من الأصل



# 12/SPIN DOCTORS

## How 'Government Sources' massaged the message

Labour's spin doctors have been busy in Brighton this week, creating news agendas, setting some hares running and snaring others. Our Political Editor examines their machinations and manipulations.

Last weekend two Sunday newspapers were told that Peter Mandelson, founding father of the spinning trade in Britain, was not going to win a place on the Labour Party's national executive committee.

The two political reporters did not write that piece of "news", because they did not believe it to be true. They actually thought it was an attempt to make the minister without portfolio look even better when he won a "surprise" victory on Tuesday.

When Tuesday came, and it was certain that he was not going to win a seat, the spin doctors were out in force at the headquarters hotel, the Metropole, and, later, to the conference media centre.

The damage-limitation was based on the "line" that the national executive vote was a personal beauty contest that had nothing to do with Tony Blair's project to modernise the party and that, anyway, Mr Mandelson was not very well known to party members. Only the delegates from Mars can have missed Mr Mandelson over the last year.

One of the most bizarre exercises in damage-limiting spin was carried on the front page of yesterday's *Sun*, under the banner headline: "TV star's twisted love for Blair's top man". The story identified Alastair Campbell, press secretary to the Prime Minister, as "the innocent victim of the actress's deluded passion".

A number of informed sources said yesterday that Mr Campbell had given the story to the *Sun* because he wanted to "spoil" a more hostile version that a Sunday newspaper had been planning to run this weekend.

Some of the week's spin was more positive, such as the briefing on Gordon Brown's speech,

restoring the party commitment to full employment - although the general public could be forgiven for wondering how the preview could attract more attention than the Chancellor's speech itself.

At least Mr Brown uttered the words. The *Sunday Express* reported this week that Mr Blair would refer to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, which he did not do. But the same newspaper presented a preview briefing on the Blair speech as if it had got hold of an early draft. Mr Blair was so puzzled by that hint of a leak

that the spin doctor who was responsible for that particular calumny later confessed that the purpose of the exercise had been to turn the heat and spotlight on to the delegates who were threatening to vote against government policy.

In effect, the media were being used as a weapon, raising the question for delegates: "Do you really want to be responsible for a defeat that will be splashed all over the news as a humiliation for the Government?"

The BBC gave that report prominence in its preliminary Sunday reports on the conference. But in an interview with *Progress*, a mainstream party periodical, John Birt, the BBC director-general, said: "In the perfect world, there would be less spin-doctoring than there is. Certainly, I don't think [it] is an aid to good journalism; I think too much of our journalists' and editors' [time] is taken up listening to spin doctors, rather than doing their jobs."

What Mr Birt does not seem to understand is that, because the spin doctors often make and deliver the news, it is part of the job of reporters to have their ears bent by them.

Objects of obsession, page 19



Photograph: Brian Harris

BY  
ANTHONY  
BEVINS

that he asked Mr Campbell: "What on earth is going on here?"

Mr Campbell could not have made more use of the Prime Minister's text. The *Observer* was told that his battle against global warming would form a centre-piece of the speech. By Tuesday, it had been boiled down to a single paragraph. The *Daily Mail* fared much better, reporting on Tuesday's front-page that the family would be a centre-piece, as it was.

But the spin itself can backfire, as it appeared to do when Tuesday's *Telegraph* carried a front-page report saying that Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, planned to warn in his conference speech that members of health boards would lose their jobs if they used private health care.

By the time the speech was delivered, the threat appeared to have been watered down and there was a strong suspicion that Mr Dobson had been forced to back off for fear of attracting unwanted controversy.

On the party side of the spin operation, one of the early exercises of the week was to spread messages of gloom and doom about Wednesday's education vote on tuition fees.

Broadcasters were told on Sunday that the leadership was anticipating defeat, which did not

## Whitehall's press machine 'sidelined'

Civil servants in the Government Information Service are under increasing attack from the spin doctors and their new political masters. Michael Streeter hears that they may turn to the Cabinet Secretary for help.

In the clash between Labour ministers and Whitehall's press officers there has been one telling casualty - an almost complete absence of communication.

A typically blunt letter from Alastair Campbell that government press officers should focus more on the "big messages" of policy is just the latest sign of Labour's unhappiness with Whitehall's team of official information officers.

Ministers have complained loudly about the contrast between government press officers and the ultra-smooth Millbank Labour machine to which they have become accustomed.

However, officials complain that they have received virtually no idea from ministers on just what is required. One source said: "All we've been told is that ministers want us to give the 'message' not the news. And they want us to be more active at weekends, promoting their policies. But that's all we've been told - we feel sidelined and in some cases bullied."

The most extreme case of sidelining is a decision by Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, to appoint an external public relations consultant to promote the New Deal for Loos Parents campaign.

Union officials representing staff have complained that this move is "insulting" to their professionalism and has "drastically" undermined morale.

The Government's arguments are summarised in the Campbell memo which says: "There are three parts to any story - the build-up, the event and the follow through. My sense is that the middle of these three gets all the attention ... We should always know how big stories will be playing in the next day's papers."

David Luxton, national officer for the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists, which represents many civil servants, warned that there had been a "blurring of the edges" between the job of the information officers and party press officers. "The information officers are there to explain departmental policy to the public and media - not just to act as press officers for individual ministers."

He said the IPMS is considering seeking help from Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, in clarifying the role of information officers. "Our members are keen to work with the new administration and learn any new tricks their new masters think necessary - but that can only be done by working together."

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# 14/FOOD & DRINK

## When is a jar not a jar? When it's a pint

Brewers and pubs are secretly inflicting massive price increases on drinkers by pumping air into beer, according to *The Good Pub Guide*. Up to 10 per cent of a pint may be lost in this way. Glenda Cooper, Consumer Affairs Correspondent, investigates.

"I'm the man the very fat man that waters the workers' beer/Yes I'm the man, the very fat man that waters the workers' beer/What do I care if it makes them ill or it costs them terribly dear? I've a car, a yacht and an aeroplane and I waters the workers' beer".

That ditty, sung by Norman

Willis at past Trades Union Congresses, sums up the British feeling: Mess with anything except a pint of beer. In the past drinkers feared the beer being watered down. But now experts warn that we are in danger of losing up to 10 per cent of a pint by having air pumped into it to create a head.

More pubs in the Midlands and the South are picking up the northern practice of using a device known as a "sparkler" which pumps air into the pint.

As a result as much of 10 per cent of the pint may be air, equivalent to increasing the cost of the remaining beer by 11 per cent.

Rob Ainsworth, associate editor of *The Good Pub Guide*, said yesterday: "If you get 98 pints in a barrel by careful pouring pints can squeeze 96 pints - that's eight pints more. Throughout the country that's

quite a lot of money saved ... It's absolutely disgraceful."

The survey of 1,338 pubs comes as an investigation by trading standards officers in Liverpool also estimates that beer drinkers are being shortchanged by up to 6p. The survey of beer measures conducted by trading standards officers in city pubs during September produced some sobering statistics.

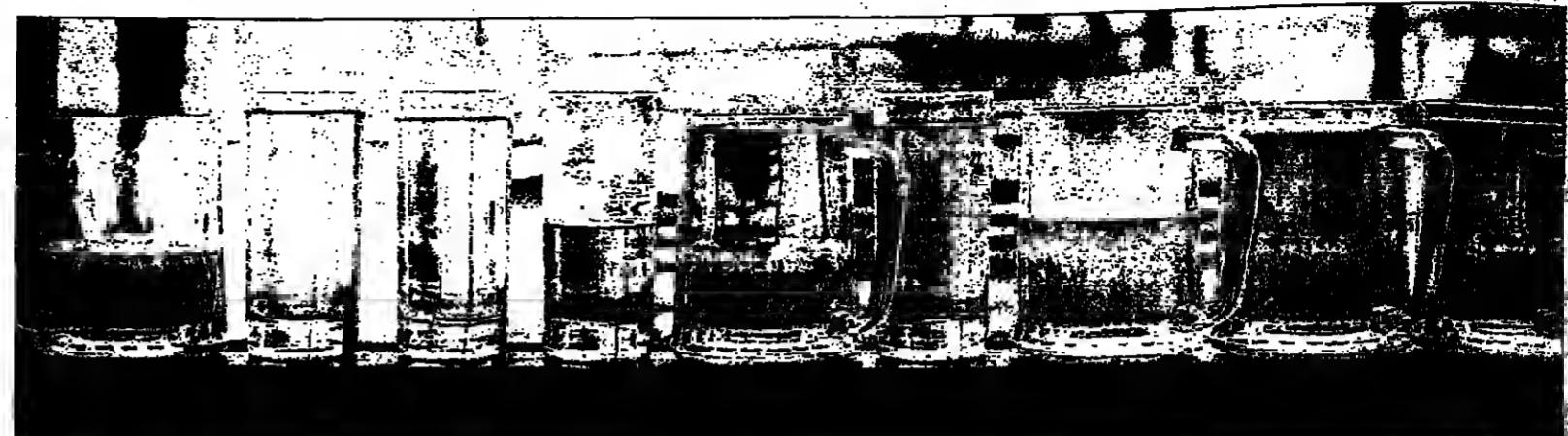
Only three drinks out of 60 measured could boast a full pint of beer and almost 40 per cent contained less than 95 per cent of liquid - the brewing industry's own unofficial guideline governing the height of the head. On average, drinks deemed to be around 4 per cent short of a full liquid pint with some customers sacrificing up to 23p on their tipple.

As a result a Labour MP, Dennis Turner, is to introduce a Private Member's Bill to clearly define the size of a pint. He has already won the backing of Nigel Griffiths, the consumer affairs minister, who said: "When the customer asks for a pint and is charged for a pint, that's the quantity that they should be served."

But a spokesman for the Brewers and Licensed Retailers' Association said it was an issue which attracted few complaints from customers. "Our members are encouraged and encourage their bar staff so that if people are unhappy with their pint they can always get a top-up," he said. "But it

really isn't something that happens very much."

*The Good Pub Guide* also points out that pubs tied to the big national breweries are still the high-cost option for cus-



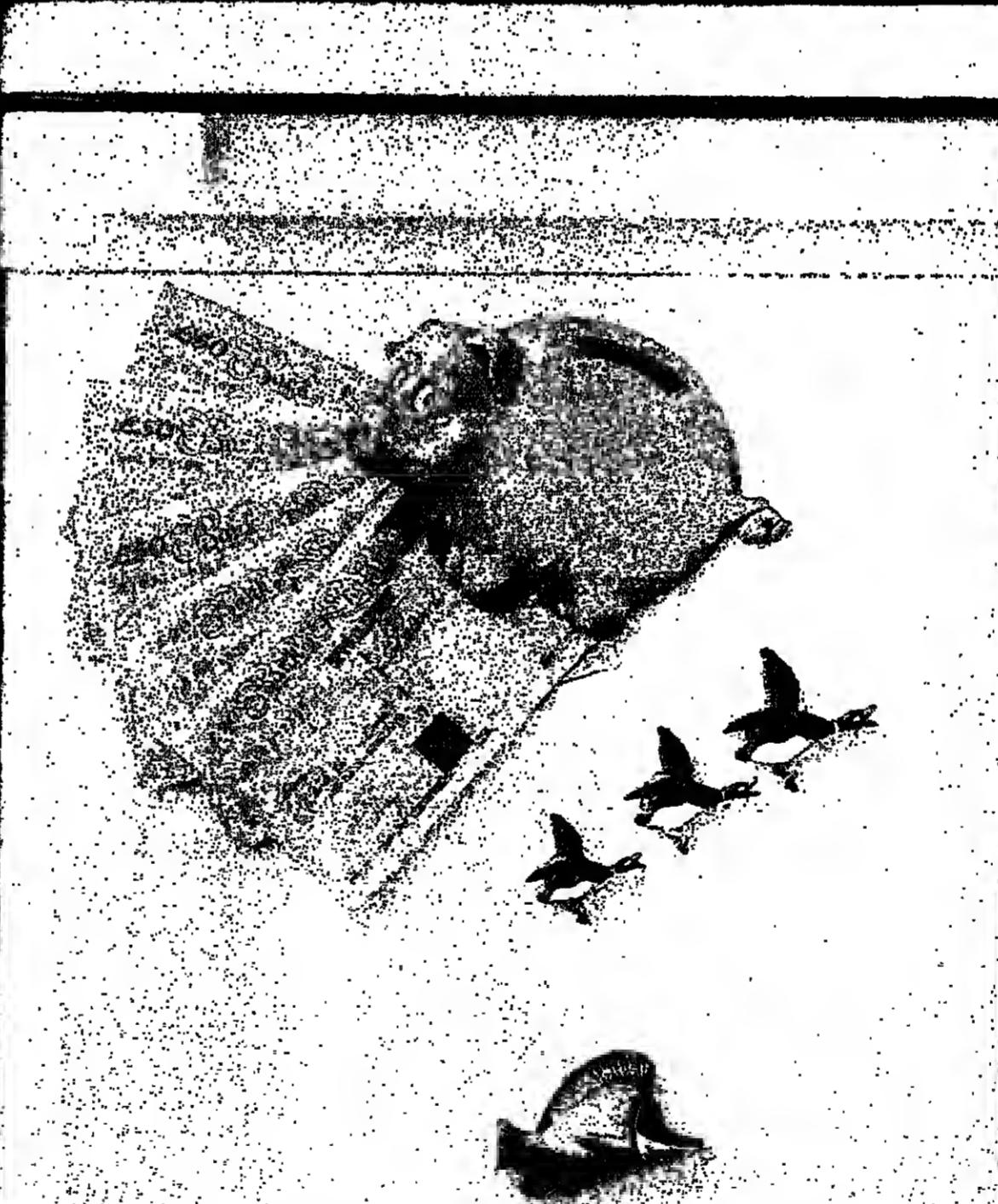
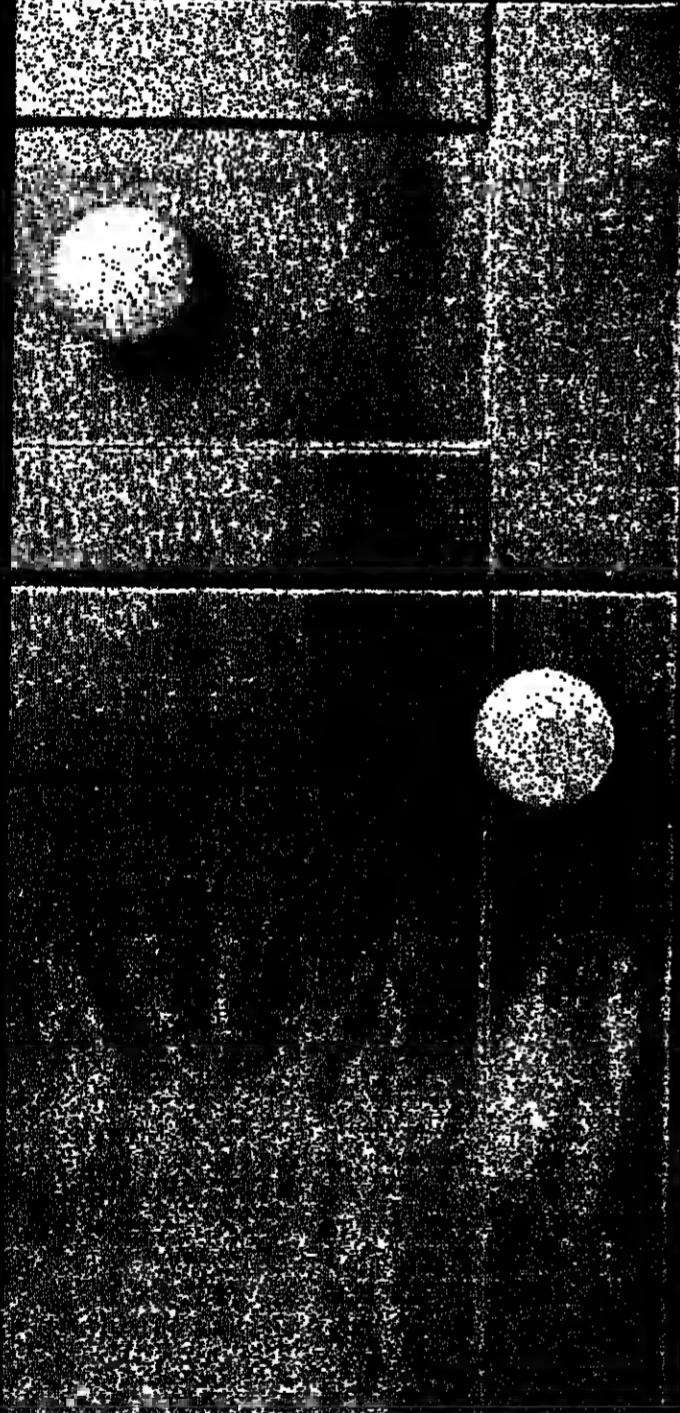
Liquid assets: An MP plans to introduce a Private Member's Bill aimed at defining the size of a pint

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

tomers - smaller and local regional brewers can save as much as 41p on your pint.

● The winner of the Pub of the Year award is the Wykeham Arms in Winchester.

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Mock summit: EU opponents outside the Royal Palace yesterday while the Amsterdam treaty was signed. Photograph: AFP

## CURRENCY COUNTDOWN

- EU governments immediately to launch or intensify advertising and educational campaign to win over the general public.
- Governments to select before the end of 1997 the design of the national faces of euro coins – physical production of coins to start from next May.
- Before end of 1997, commission to make a formal proposal on exact date for introduction of coins and notes.
- Member states to present by end 1997 their draft legislation for how national public administrations will make the transition to euros for tax declarations and accounting.
- Public-debt issuers must clarify by the end of the year the treatment of outstanding stocks of debt and new issues of debt in euros after 1 January 1999.
- Decisions on the tax consequences of the euro must be made known before the end of the year.
- Computer and information systems will have to be adapted before end 1998.
- "EUR" currency code and symbol for the euro to be registered so that computer systems can be adapted.
- Decision to be taken before end of the year on dual pricing displays in shops after launch of euro.
- Technical work on coins to be finalised over next three months to include nickel content, quantities of coins to be produced by national mints, handling of used coins and issue of commemorative coins.

## Last-minute rush to get the euro into your pocket

Brussels has told EU member states to start preparing consumers, shops, businesses and national administrations for the huge upheaval which switching to the euro in 1999 will entail. This brings Britain's dilemma over membership into even sharper focus, writes Katherine Butler.



Evenhanded: Stallholder Salvatore with lira and euros in Pontassieve, Tuscany, where both currencies are being used in a six-month trial. Photograph: Vincenzo Pinto

With talk of delay in economic and monetary union (EMU) fading into the background and just seven months to go before the selection of the first batch of currencies to join, the European Commission is giving governments an end-of-year deadline to finalise the outstanding practical and legal groundwork for the introduction of the euro.

Urgent decisions are needed on such things as how government departments will deal with the switchover and how public-debt issuers will treat new issues in euros.

But fearing psychological trauma among ordinary citizens, the commission also wants governments to launch or intensify public education campaigns. This follows warnings from consumer groups and retailers who believe that public awareness lags severely behind the pace of political pressure for a single currency.

The fears are obvious. How will people cope with prices labelled in what will seem like a foreign currency? Will elderly people stop spending money because they fear the shopkeepers are swindling them? Will mass confusion reign if the new notes and coins start circulating on the first day of the January sales?

Efforts to inform the public up to now have been amateurish in the face of the revolution in store. A "Euro-barge" financed by the European Union was dispatched up the Rhine

earlier this summer dispensing leaflets to bewildered tourists. And some banks have set up booths to deal with questions from people worried about their savings plans or mortgages. But the commission is now urging governments to prepare for mass education campaigns to run between May 1998 and January 1999.

In the meantime, the focus will be on encouraging training for retailers, bank tellers, consumer groups, and those who will have to act as troubleshooters in the confusion. The commission is also examining whether laws will be needed to protect consumers against high conversion charges during the transition.

The decision to reserve one side of the new coins for "national" symbols peculiar to each member state is intended to enhance public acceptance, but so far only the French and Germans have chosen their designs. Yves Thibault de Silguy, commissioner for the single currency, now wants the remaining candidate countries to unveil theirs before the end of the year so production of coins can begin from May 1998.

The administrative challenge is also enormous. The commission admits: national administrations will have to be revolutionised, for example

to allow companies and individuals to make tax returns in euros. In some countries this will become a possibility as early as 1999 even though notes and coins will not be in circulation until 2000.

Information systems will also have to be adapted and the commission warns that the changes will coincide with massive upheaval caused by the problem of the turn-of-the-century date change – the threat that many computer systems will cease to function properly from 2000. Because keyboards will have to accommodate the new euro symbol, manufacturers need to start preparing new models now.

Banks and big corporations in most member states are at an advanced stage of preparation but the lack of awareness among small businesses was "frightening", the EU industry commissioner Martin Bangemann admitted yesterday.

Mr de Silguy said yesterday that British officials were co-operating fully in discussions on the technical preparations for EMU. That will offer little comfort, however, to British businesses or retailers who still have no idea whether their customers will still be paying for goods in sterling when their European neighbours are counting their cash in euros.

## France presses Britain for a commitment on EMU

France is hoping to hurry up a "clear signal" of Britain's intentions on the single currency. It hopes that it might get one on Monday when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, meets his French counterpart, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, in Paris.

But, as John Lichfield reports, Mr Brown is unlikely to give anything away, at least in public.

Gordon Brown and Dominique Strauss-Kahn have a lot in common and a lot to talk about. They are both handsome, youngish men, with a tendency to arrogance, doing the job that they always wanted. Both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the French economy minister are attempting to define a new kind of centre-left economic policy, mixing rigour with selective compassion. Both, in different ways, have key roles to play in the making, or the breaking, of the final negotiations on the European

single currency in the next seven months.

Their meeting in Paris on Monday – informal talks followed by dinner – will be their first proper tête-à-tête since Britain and France elected left-of-centre governments in the late spring. Paris hopes that the meeting will mark a significant new stage in the readmission of Britain to mainstream European politics. French officials talk of the need for the Blair government to make a "clear statement" sometime soon on its policy towards economic and monetary union (EMU).

Will there be a referendum next year? Will the Government opt out of the 1999 starting line-up for EMU but declare its desire – referendum permitting – to sign up soon afterwards?

According to British

sources, Mr Brown is unlikely to give anything away on Monday, at least in public.

The French have a good reason for wanting to jog Britain along. They feel that the Blair government, once publicly committed to EMU, would be more likely to support France's position in its dispute with

Germany over how the single currency should be managed.

The Socialist-led French administration has scaled down its original ambitions for a "European economic government" which would provide political balance to the monetary power of the new, independent European central bank. But French officials say that they are still pressing for the creation of a "Euro Council", a conclave of finance ministers of the EMU countries to discuss, and sometimes to co-ordinate, broad economic policy. Such a council would not create a new European Union institution, they say. It could be "informal" but it must be "legitimate" (that is, work within the EU treaties) and "visible" (publicly recognised as more than a talking shop).

The French acknowledge that the Blair government is suspicious that such a body might work against the interests of countries which opt out of EMU: in effect, it might become the polithro of a European "hard-core". But once the British government moves towards the single currency, they

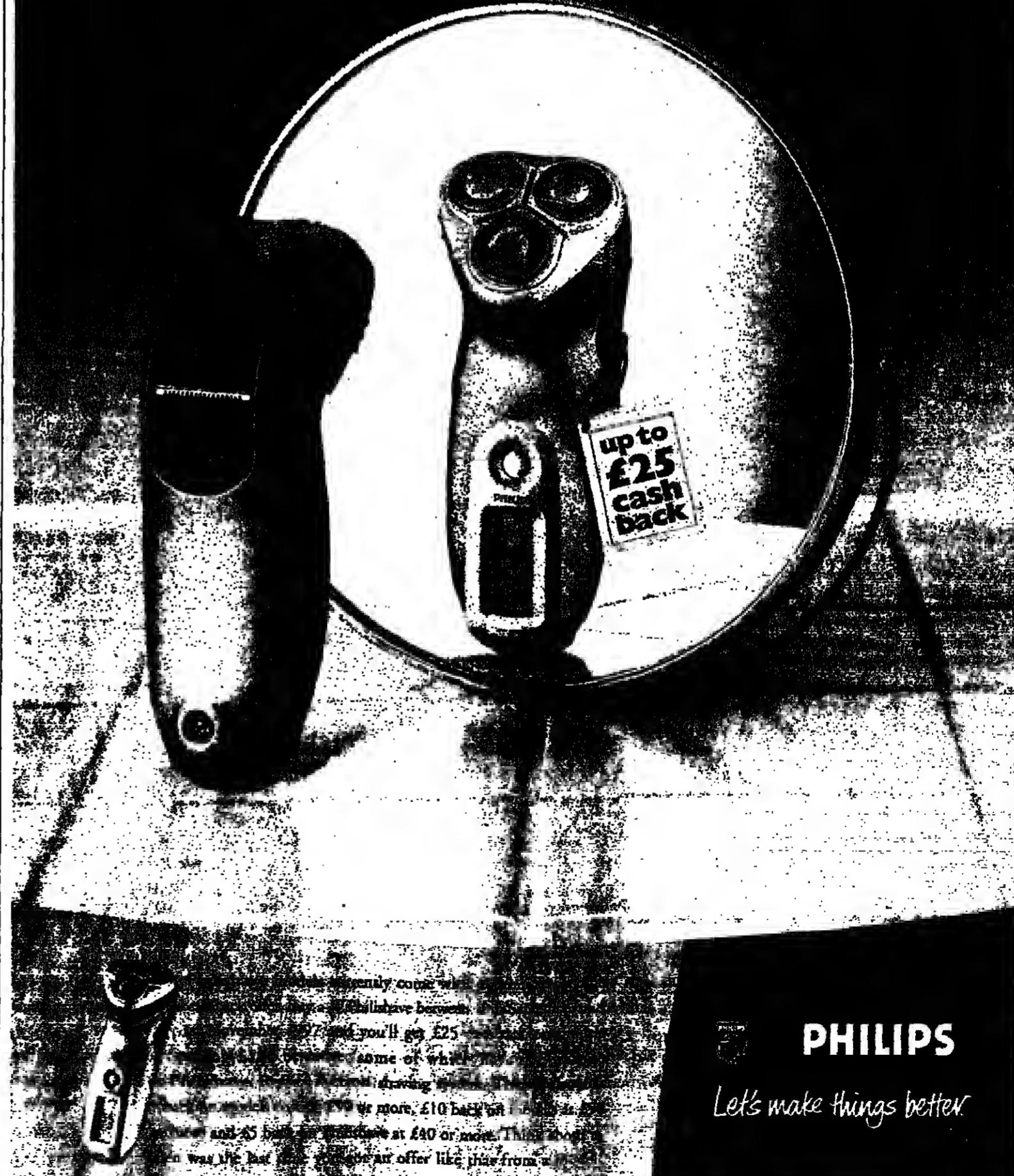
believe that Mr Brown would support their campaign for balanced EMU management, over the purely monetarist German approach.

Whether or not Britain makes an early statement on EMU (the chances are "not"), Mr Brown will play a key role in the final single currency negotiations. Britain takes over the rotating, six-monthly presidency of the EU in January and the Chancellor will chair all the detailed talks leading to final decisions next May. So the EMU starting line-up and the exchange rates at which countries will merge their currencies into the Euro.

France is playing down earlier reports in its press that it would like to bring forward the starting date of EMU to forestall a wave of currency speculation in the seven months' transition between these final decisions and the launch date ordained by the Maastricht treaty. But French officials say that it is important that the "Euro Council", dear to Mr Strauss-Kahn's heart, should be in place by May to "steady the boat" during the seven months' hiatus.

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John Lichfield

## All-American eco-freaks want to ban immigration

The biggest environmental organisation in the US, the century-old Sierra Club, is to ballot its members on whether to include an anti-immigration policy in its platform. Mary Dejevsky examines the background to the vote.

The half-million strong Sierra Club is a venerable American institution, whose current publications discuss conserving a state forest in Pennsylvania, the ecological benefits of wetlands and how writing letters to politicians can be as effective a form of lobbying as

donating large sums of money. For more than 30 years, however, it has incorporated into its aim of preserving wild places in the US and the world, the need – as it sees it – to limit population numbers.

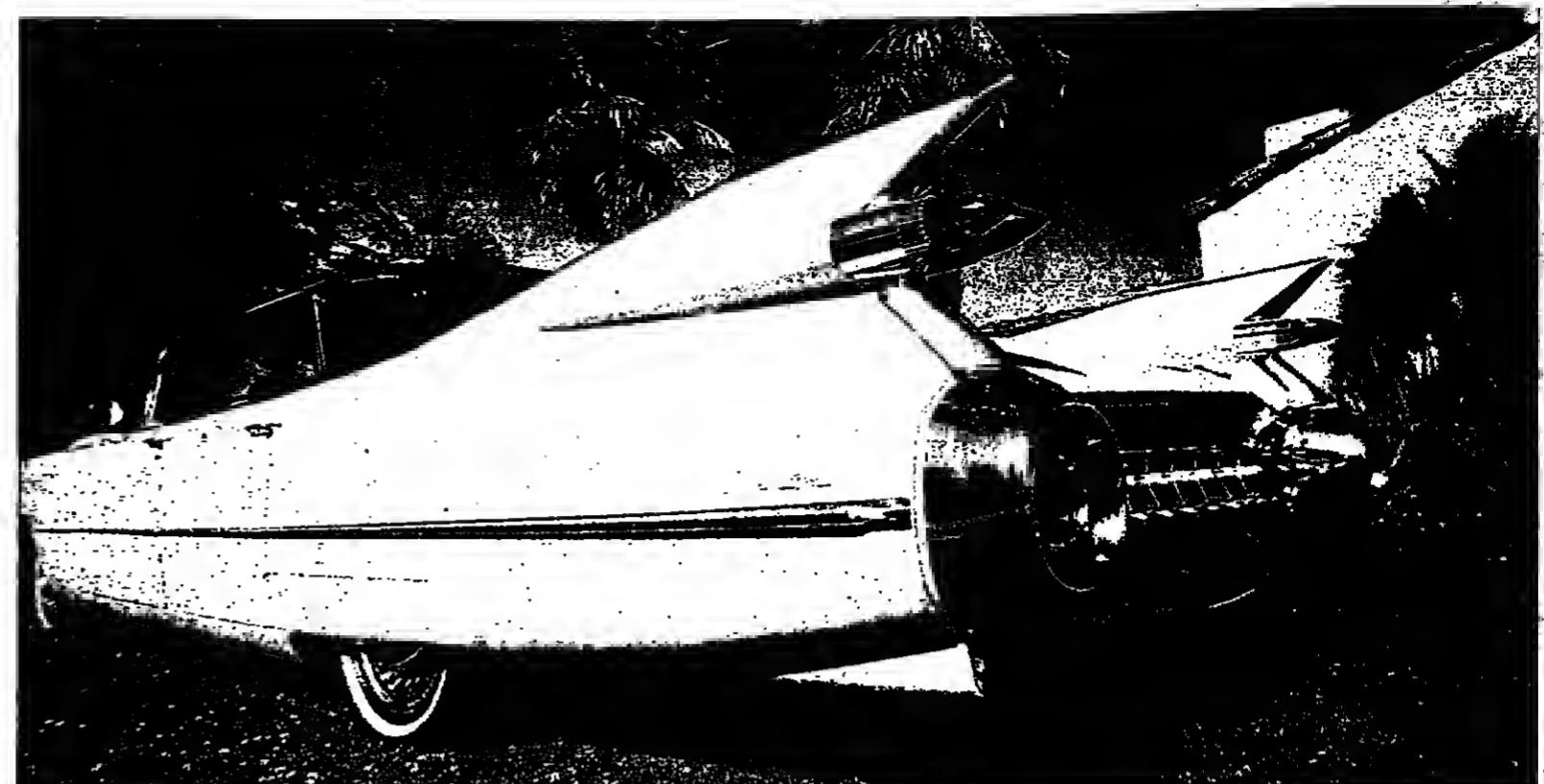
To that end, it supports and helps to fund family-planning projects across the world. "A rapid end to population growth in this country and around the world," says its literature, "is an essential part of any effort to protect the environment." In 1990, Sierra Club members gave "population control" the highest number of votes of any of the Club's national campaigns – and the popularity of that issue has not waned.

Now, with immigration registering high among political concerns of several US

states – especially California where the Sierra Club has its headquarters – the club has taken a step further. It has passed in a membership vote a grassroots initiative calling for a reduction in immigration into the United States.

The argument advanced by one of those behind the initiative, Alan Kuper, is that immigration feeds overpopulation which in turn increases traffic, air pollution, water shortages etc. With US population growth now deriving exclusively from immigration – as native-born Americans have fewer children – he believes the club should lend its considerable political weight to the anti-immigration movement.

The vote is scheduled for March and members' approval is not a foregone conclusion.



Big and greedy: Attitudes towards the car in America have changed little since the gas-guzzling days of this 1959 Cadillac

Photograph: Colorific

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The United States is under pressure to match Europe's reductions in carbon emissions before world leaders meet in Kyoto to negotiate a global climate treaty.

President Clinton has been trying to persuade his nation by enlisting car makers, scientists and television weather forecasters. But he is meeting some fierce resistance.

Mary Dejevsky says that a scientific conference to be held at the White House on Monday could tip the balance.

Whenever Americans switch on their televisions or open their newspapers at the moment, they come face to face with lavish advertisements forecasting imminent environmental disaster.

This is not the scientists' nightmare of rising sea-levels, flooded cities and desolate fields that has so impressed itself on European minds, but the claim that – if the Europeans and others get their way – Americans will have to pay an extra 50 cents for each gallon of petrol they buy, the price of electricity and gas "could soar", and, because of higher production costs, so could the price of everything else.

The advertisements are sponsored by lobbyists for the powerful United States energy and automotive industries, which fear that the administration is about to bow to pressure from the Europeans (and almost everyone else in the world) and finally agree to reductions in its emissions of carbon gases.

These are the gases that many scientists believe cause the phenomenon known as global warming. The US, with its gas-guzzling cars, wasteful power plants and thirsty central heating and cooling systems is far and away the world's biggest producer of such gases.

From the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to the five-year follow-up meeting held in New York this summer, the US has managed to fend off the increasingly insistent calls for action.

At New York, however, President Bill Clinton could only buy time, promising in

announce US measures at Kyoto in Japan. Now, with the main preparatory meeting for the Kyoto conference to be held in Bonn later this month, the US must decide whether to support or scupper the planned treaty. The outbreak of cut-throat lobbying in the American media, a succession of briefings and seminars on climate change in Washington this week and some frantic activity at the White House in recent days – to culminate in Monday's "science summit" – are the outward manifestations of a policy battle that is approaching its climax.

At the beginning of the week, President Clinton finally decided to lead from the front and said publicly that he accepted the need to combat global warming.

On Tuesday, he sent his environment secretary, Bruce Babbitt, to address a meeting organised by the Union of Concerned Scientists. Mr Babbitt's first duty was to receive an open letter, signed by more than 1,500 eminent scientists, calling on world leaders – including US leaders – to act urgently to reduce carbon emissions.

On Wednesday, Mr Clinton invited 100 of the country's television weather forecasters to the White House to hear his pitch again, along with the presentations of assembled scientists.

The idea was not, it was said, to impose a "reduce emissions" slant on the nation's weather forecasts, but to inform the broadcasters of the arguments.

Yesterday it was the turn of the car-makers. The chief executives of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler had reportedly requested such a meeting to air what a Ford spokesman described as their "deep reservations" about the Kyoto conference.

They fear that higher petrol tax and more environmentally geared specifications could damage the US car market.

Cars and the price of petrol are – as the lobbyists, and the administration well realise – a prize card in the hand of those who oppose a US commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

Only recently liberated from the 55mph speed limit introduced during the Seventies energy crisis, and still wedded to large, heavy cars, Americans are scared by nothing more than the prospect of gasoline and car prices rising to European levels.

The argument, presented forcefully in Washington this week by the former Tory British secretary of state for the environment, John Gummer, is that the vastly higher fuel consumption of American cars

makes motoring in the US almost as expensive as in Europe and that low fuel prices have allowed cars, heating systems and electrical appliances to remain irresponsibly wasteful. It is not one that most Americans want to hear.

Mr Gummer was in the US to make the point that a Conservative government had been both convinced enough of the risk of global warming and concerned enough about its consequences to take effective action – reducing carbon emissions in the UK by almost 20 per cent since 1990.

His message was addressed partly to the Republican majority in the US Congress, which remains unconvinced by the scientific arguments, reluctant to pass legislation that would increase costs, and could block ratification of a treaty. But he was also warning the Administration of the international opprobrium that the US would incur if it diluted or refused to sign the planned Kyoto treaty.

Although Mr Clinton now seems fully converted to the cause and is making it his, the battle is by no means won. Mr Babbitt told Tuesday's meeting that the President found himself having to manoeuvre between the whirlpool of international disapproval and the "monsters" of the US Senate and revealed that a furious debate was going on inside the administration. That debate, like the one in the country at large, is complicated by Mr Clinton's plans for the imminent deregulation of the US energy sector. The energy industry is thus fighting on multiple fronts – not just against the scientists of global warming, but against anything that would jeopardise their current market position and their future competitiveness.

At Tuesday's conference, Mr Babbitt tried to console the scientists by saying that the US would announce its position at Bonn later this month. Significantly, however, he was substituting for the meeting's billed keynote speaker, Vice-President Al Gore – until recently the administration's "Mr Environment".

Mr Gore's decision to stay in the White House and have the television cameras film him operating a "V-chip" – the device that would allow parents to censor their children's television viewing – showed which cause he judged the politically safer bet. If Mr Gore returns to his role as chief environmentalist, this could be a sign that Mr Clinton has turned the tide. But no one, not even the weather forecasters, is making any firm predictions.

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## Court tells council to pick up £2m bill for cliff-fall hotel

Landowners and their insurers face the prospect of huge bills for natural disasters following a High Court judgment. Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent, explains.



Costly slip: Holbeck Hall after the big slide

When the grandios Holbeck Hall Hotel on the North Yorkshire coast plunged down a cliff-side a few years ago it was only the beginning. That spectacular and expensive landslide in 1992 resulted in a legal earthquake yesterday.

Scarborough borough council was held liable for the destruction of the four star Victorian hotel, and its insurers are facing a bill of about £2m. A judge in London ruled that the authority broke its duty of care to maintain the land and cliffs which it owned between the hotel's surroundings and the sea.

One night in June 1993 part of the Holbeck Hall's gently sloping lawn collapsed. A second slide in the early hours removed most of the remaining lawn. After guests and staff were evacuated, further collapses took out the hotel's conservatory and almost its entire seaward wing.

What was left of the building, which had enjoyed panoramic views of the seaside town and coastline, was unsafe and had to be demolished.

The disaster was headline news, and the late John Smith used it as a potent metaphor for Britain's decline under the Conservatives in his leader's speech to the Labour Party conference a few months later.

The decision of Judge John Hicks QC is highly controversial, and in giving his judgment

judgment in 1980, the National Trust was held liable for the damage done when rocks tumbled off one of its properties and smashed into a house.

"I regard the Leakey versus National Trust decision as a blot on our jurisprudence," said Professor Howarth. "I know of no instance when it has been applied, until now."

In court, the hotel's insurers' lawyers had alleged that the council's engineering department failed to heed expert advice when it was trying to alleviate the risk of a deep-seated slip of Holbeck cliff.

Lawyers acting for the council's insurers said the stabilising work it planned for the cliffs was based on the recommendations of its geotechnical experts, GEN, who had surveyed the cliff and liability rested with them. They also argued that these works, carried out in 1989, were reasonable and the collapse of the 200ft high cliff could not have been foreseen.

Judge Hicks said it should have been clear that a more far-reaching land stabilisation scheme was necessary. Scarborough had breached a common law duty to take steps to prevent or minimise damage to its neighbour.

John Trebble, Scarborough's chief executive, said there would be an appeal. "The judgment comes as a serious shock to all concerned. It breaks totally new ground as it seeks to create a new duty on landowners, the implications of which are quite startling, based on very nebulous principles."

Coastal councils do have statutory responsibilities for protecting land against sea erosion. Judge Hicks said he felt bound by a principle established in an earlier, equally controversial case - Leakey versus the National Trust.

In that Court of Appeal

he invited an appeal against it. Unless it is overruled by a higher court, the complex judgment - following a 36 day hearing - leaves landowners liable for any damage caused to their neighbours by natural phenomena like erosion and landslides.

"The liabilities could be phenomenal and the consequences serious," said William Howarth, Professor of environmental law at Kent University. "It goes against the general principle that landowners can't be held responsible for natural hazards, and I hope there is a successful appeal."

The case hinges on the council's duties as a landowner holding the land next to the hotel, and not on its responsibilities to combat coastal erosion. Judge Hicks said he felt bound by a principle established in an earlier, equally controversial case - Leakey versus the National Trust.

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In that Court of Appeal



Flawed monument: The Glenfinnan tower at Loch Shiel, built to commemorate the clansmen who died for Bonnie Prince Charlie, has a growing list and a figure modelled on the wrong hero - supposedly the prince but in fact one of his men

Photograph: Glyn Satterley/NTS

## Leaning tower of the North makes a move on Pisa

Edinburgh is the 'Athens of the North' and now Scotland has grounds to make a claim for an emerging 'Pisa of the North'. Stephen Goodwin, Heritage Correspondent, reports on a monument on the move.

Before the authorities closed the Leaning Tower of Pisa seven years ago, ascensionists on the internal spiral staircase constantly bumped the impending wall as they tried to remain upright. Sadly, this curious sensation is denied the Blairistas who now flood Tuscan.

But Pisa has a pre-elder to its crown. Standing by the banks of Loch Shiel, in the west of Scotland, the 182-year old Glenfinnan monument to the clansmen who died for Bonnie Prince Charlie is leaning 10 inches to the west.

Talk of closure would be

than half go up the 65ft monument.

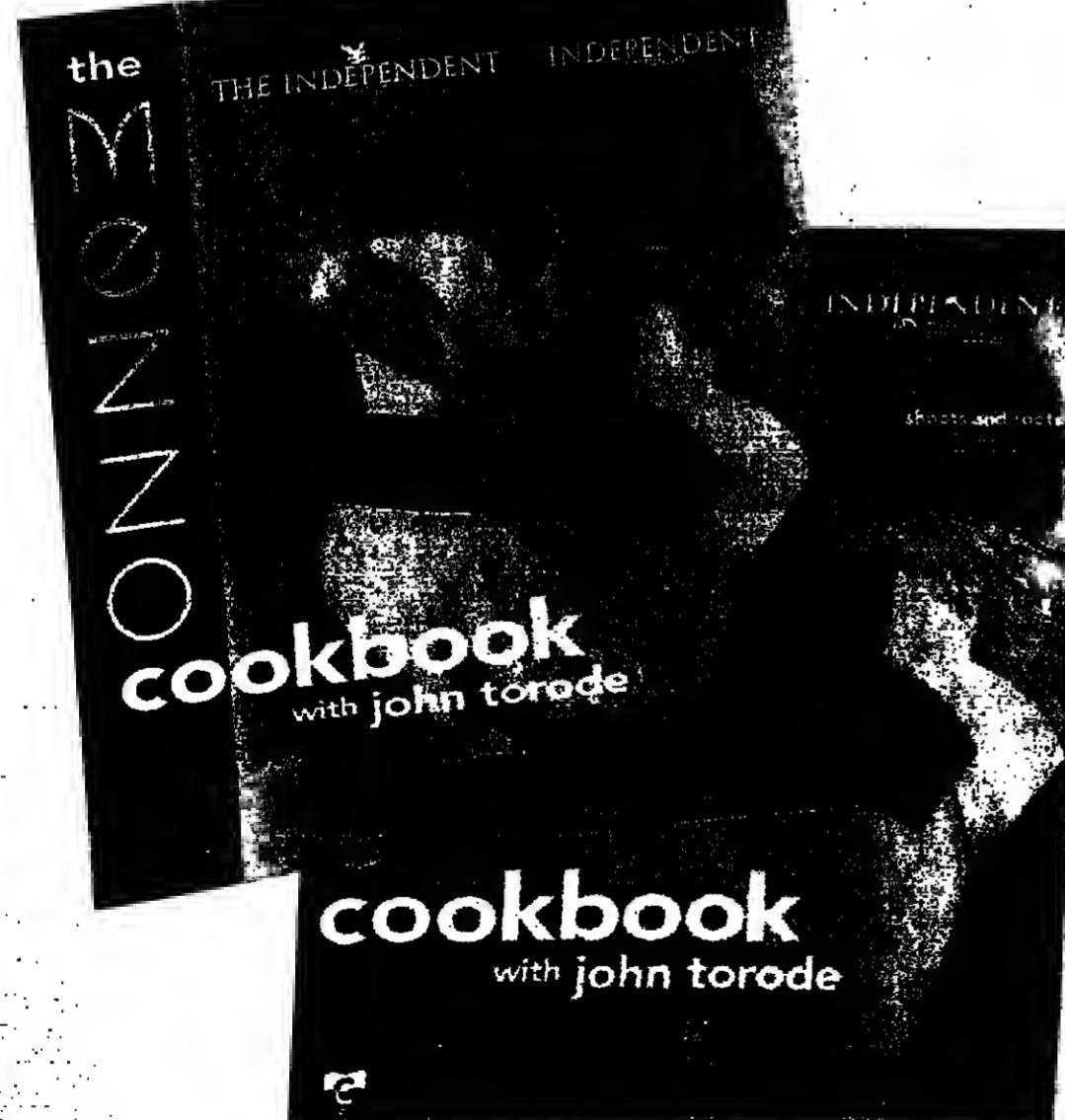
Like Pisa, the tower has an internal spiral stair. However, the lean is nowhere near as dramatic. The top of Pisa's 179ft tower is a giddy 17ft off perpendicular. In 1929 the Glenfinnan monument was recorded as leaning three inches to the east. Now its lean in the opposite direction is just becoming visible to the eye.

It will be up to the £8,000 monitoring and survey programme to determine the precise cause of the list but it seems to be due to subsidence of the sandy peaty soil and

flooding. The monument is only 35ft from the loch and storms have eroded the bank.

Glenfinnan will no doubt be able to take the extra notoriety it's stride. It is not the first time the granite tower has been embarrassed. The sandstone figure gazing from its battlement down Loch Shiel is supposed to be the Bonnie Prince. But the sculptor, John Greenshields, mistakenly modelled the work on a portrait of young George Lockhart of Carnworth - who served in the prince's army - and a chap now inclining increasingly to his left.

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## Yeltsin may aim for third term as President

Will Boris Yeltsin stand again for election as Russia's President? He hinted yesterday that his mind is not quite made up. Phil Reeves sifts through the evidence.

Kremlin watchers have never needed more than a slither of a rumour on which to base their predictions. So they were delighted yesterday when Boris Yeltsin served up a considerably tastier morsel – a hint, a palpable hint, that he has not ruled out running for a third term.

As ever, it was not so much what was said, as what wasn't. A month ago the 66-year-old president categorically stated would not seek another stint in office, preferring to stand aside for younger candidates. But yesterday ambiguity set in, fuelled by the evidence that he now seems to be positively relishing his job as the head of a chaotic, crime-drenched country. He was joking when he recently described himself as Tsar Boris the First. But, for many, it had a plausible ring.

Questioned about a third term by reporters during a trip to Nizhny Novgorod, he laughed, but issued no clear denial. "Friends and colleagues have forbidden me from talking about this," he said.

However faint, the possibility that he might seek to hold onto power is a reflection of the president's extraordinary reversal of fortune in the last ten months. Can this be the man who was so sick with heart trouble only a year ago that he became a near hermit?

This week his former chief of staff, Sergei Filatov, told The Independent that Mr Yeltsin had twice told him that he was thinking of not running in last year's poll, when he won re-election. Those discussions were in the summer of 1995, when he was sick, unpopular, drinking, and sending thousands of his countrymen to their death in Chechnya. In the end, he was persuaded by his supporters – a tiny elite enriched by reforms, who feared a Communist victory – to stay on. Elements of the same group, now divided, seem to be at work again.

A third bid for office would lead to a debate over the Russian constitution which restricts presidents to two terms. However, Mr Yeltsin has some room for manoeuvre: he was first elected as president of the Russian republic in 1991, when it remained part of the Soviet Union. The



President Yeltsin, apparently feeling rather better these days

Russian constitution, however, was not passed until 1993.

Yesterday's squall of speculation will not bring much joy to the millions of Russian impoverished by the transition from Communism, especially those who remember the stagnant last years of Leonid Brezhnev. Mr Yeltsin has already survived seven years longer than the average Russian male: by the end of a third term, he would be 73 – a mere two years younger than Mr Brezhnev when he died.

It is also a measure of the perverse nature of Moscow politics. The vast power of the president severely limits the role of the opposition between elections, condemning them to a life of dreaming wistfully about their next trip to the ballot box.

With three years left to the next election, two of his opponents – ex-general Alexander Lebed, and the liberal Grigory Yavlinsky – have already declared their candidacy. Several others, notably the authoritarian mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, are blatantly campaigning. Election politics are on a permanent loop in Russia, and Mr Yeltsin's behaviour yesterday ensured that it keeps spinning merrily.

## US fires army laser to test its own satellites

The United States will fire two brief but powerful laser beams at an ageing American satellite in the next few days to test the vulnerability of its satellite systems, defense department officials said. "Secretary of Defense William Cohen has today approved an experiment that will be used to reduce the vulnerability of US satellite systems," the Pentagon said in a brief statement released after a Nato defence ministers' meeting in the Netherlands.

Ken Bacon, a spokesman for Mr Cohen, told reporters in the Netherlands that the two brief beams will be fired at an orbiting US Airforce satellite from the army laser, called the Mid-Infra-Red Advance Chemical Laser (Mira), from White Sands missile range in the New Mexico desert. They would not try to destroy the satellite, he added.

## Joiners to pay Nato costs

Nato told three former communist countries negotiating membership that they would have to bear most of the cost of joining themselves. "The bulk of the cost should lie on the shoulders of the three countries. There's no doubt about that," Nato Secretary-General Javier Solana told a news conference after alliance defence ministers met their counterparts from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Mr Solana said that Nato would come up with figures before the end of the year to allow parliaments in its 16 nations and the three new countries time to weigh the facts.

## Ultimatum for Karadzic

International officials presented Serb hardliners loyal to war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic with a tough choice: bow to imposed changes on broadcasting or stay off the air. A formal plan to revamp broadcasting from the half of the Bosnian Serb statelet led by Karadzic cohorts will be presented today, the office of High Representative Carlos Westendorp said.

His spokesman, Duncan Bellivant, suggested that the plan would ask for the firing of some of the hardliners responsible for broadcasts deemed inflammatory and destructive of Western peace efforts. Broadcasts from Pale, Mr Karadzic's stronghold south of Sarajevo, were pulled from the air on Wednesday, after Nato-led peace troops seized four key transmitters across Bosnia. Since then, Bosnian Serbs have only had broadcasts from Banja Luka in the west by anti-Karadzic supporters of Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavšić.

## Troops on turtle territory

An environmental group accused Nato troops on manoeuvres in southern Greece of damaging a nesting site for the endangered caretta caretta sea turtle. "The beach has been destroyed," said Dimitris Margaritoulis, president of the Sea Turtle Protection Society. Nato officials denied the beach was damaged or that any turtle nests had been harmed. More than 5,000 troops, nearly 200 planes and 70 ships from Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, Portugal and the United States are taking part in Nato's 19-day "Dynamic Mix", a large air, land and sea exercise held in the southwestern Aegean and the Mediterranean.

## Arafat visits Hamas founder in hospital



Yasser Arafat embraces Sheikh Yassin in his hospital bed yesterday

been kept in the dark on his release.

But Arafat put a brave face on the king's intervention yesterday. "I greatly thank King Hussein for this blessed effort which he has exerted to release Sheikh Yassin which we had talked about many times in the past and now (the monarch) has fulfilled his promise," Arafat added.

Sheikh Yassin was released by Israel on Wednesday under mysterious circumstances.

Speculation is rising that he may return to Gaza, agencies report.

President Arafat was driven to the hospital by King Hussein of Jordan, who received the ailing cleric on Wednesday just hours after appealing to Israel for his release from jail on humanitarian grounds.

The release was hailed in Jordan as a humanitarian triumph for King Hussein. But the monarch has come in for sharp criticism from Palestinian officials, who said Yassin should have been returned home to Gaza. They said Arafat, who had continually demanded that Israel free the wheelchair-bound Sheikh Yassin, had

Israelis, the Israeli intelligence service.

The men were travelling on Canadian passports, and yesterday Canada expressed unhappiness about the incident.

It warned Israel over what it believes may have been the "improper use" of Canadian documents.

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An author uncomfortable with her subject: Marele Day comes face-to-face with her protagonists and she is frightened.

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## The pen may be mightier than the sword but the sheep are mightier than the pen

Marele Day has written a very good, very strange novel which has transformed her career. She was a modestly successful crime writer but 'Lambs of God', a tale of weird goings-on involving nuns and sheep, has made her a star. If you don't believe Ann Treneman, ask Winona Ryder.

Marele Day is a writer who is on the brink of the big time. Her new novel *Lambs of God* has already made her a rich and happy woman. Sales are excellent, reviews great and she has just signed a deal with Hollywood. Can fame be far behind?

But all that seems very far away as I watch Marele – chic in a little black dress and chunky heels – pick her way through the small sheep pasture at Kentish Town city farm. We are here to take a photograph. Her novel is chockful of sheep and it only seemed natural to find a flock for her. Except now that we were here it was clear that Marele is frightened of sheep. "Is his name John?" she asks with a nervous look at the ram. "The name of the ram in my book is Father John."

"No, his name is Joe and you better watch out for him," says the farmer as he manhandles her.

the ram away. Marele's eyes get wider and I am sure that she would rather be anywhere else than in an enclosed space with Joe and his harem.

The pasture is getting rather crowded. In addition to the sheep, there is the farmer, Marele, the photographer, me and a radio documentary maker named Barnaby. He is doing a programme for Radio 4 on Marele called "From Down Under to Top of the World" and thinks it will be great to record what he calls the "actuality" of the sheep. To this end he is standing in the middle of the field, microphone outstretched for baa-baas. He says that when he is done with the actuality, he would like to interview me about my interview with Marele.

This is all getting so strange that I half expect to see Robert Altman burst out of the shrubbery to tell us we are all in one of his movies (presumably about the literary scene). In reality, the only filmmaker being mentioned to do with *Lambs of God* is much younger, much prettier and much bigger box office. Winona Ryder has bought the film rights and will co-produce and star. Marele says sometimes she cannot believe this happening to her: a 50-year-old former English teacher from Sydney who created the fictional private eye named Claudia Valentine, and wrote four books starring her

but then one day got a crazy idea to write a book about nuns and sheep.

Lambs of God tells the tale of Iphigenia, Carla and Margarita who live in a crumbling monastery on a remote island. The nuns have been alone for so long that they have gone feral and their lives revolve around a bastardised sort of Catholicism and their sheep (many of which are named after deceased nuns). At night they tell fairy tales and knit (their own hair as well as wool). The scene is luxuriously set with the language of smell, blood, guts, sensation.

Then one day something unusual happens. "Smell with no name," sniffs Iphigenia who soon identifies the yeasty, custardy scent as that of a man. A young priest only arrives, carrying a mobile phone and a plan to turn the area into a resort. The nuns respond by shearing him, plastering his legs together, giving him a tail and placing him in the sheep-pen.

It is a wild, wacky and literary tale that follows and it is almost impossible to match anything but the literary hit to the woman sitting before me. Marele Day is quiet, sophisticated and tells her own story in a soft Australian accent. "I was making quite a nice little living on my detective stories; people knew me and I'd be going round doing this and that," she says. "But this idea just

wouldn't go away. I thought it was wacky too but I was also quite intrigued."

She decided the only thing to do was write it and so started work. This involved a lot of research as she knew very little about sheep – "Sydney has a population of four million people and not a sheep in sight – and is not Catholic. It's always said that you should write what you know but I prefer to choose something I don't know about."

Then she had a little lie-down. "A lot of the work is done lying on the couch, day-dreaming. The first shocking idea I had was about them knitting their hair. I thought, that is so gross. Then I thought: why is that so gross? We are quite happy to wear animal hair on our backs. Why do we feel revolted by human hair? Then I thought about blood. Catholicism is a cannibalistic religion – in the Eucharist you symbolically drink blood and eat flesh and Christians all over the world do this every Sunday. So why not real blood? What's so extreme about that if you don't have wine?"

"Of course once you've had one shocking idea, well... The next one was putting the priest in plaster. It horrified me and I wondered if they might kill him. I started out not knowing where I was going to end up. I had some kind of experience writing this book that I've

written about this hot book. Lots of agents were after Marele," he says when I ring him in LA. But what, exactly, is the attraction to this strange story?

"I'll tell you what: I love about this," says Jerry. "I love the oestrogen. I love it. That's what made this book work for me."

Marele takes up the story again, carefully picking her way through the jargon. "So then he tells me we are giving it to Winona Ryder. He says that Winona is wrapping *Alien 4* and that it might take a while. But he rang me back within a week and said 'Winona's in'. She's co-producing with Fox 2000. When Variety ran the story the headline was 'Fox grabs Lambs'!"

Marele is now in a travelling phase – she has had bouts of these throughout her life – and she has just an inkling of what may become her next book. "My life has just burst open. There are so many choices as to what I could do now. I had a nice minimalist life before – a life that I enjoyed – but now it has simply burst open and I'm in a stage of deciding what to do next. If anybody has any ideas, I'd be happy to hear them." Somehow I don't think that is going to be a problem.

*Lambs of God* by Marele Day is published by Anchor at £9.99.

## Madly in love: how Nicola Pagett's infatuation tipped over into obsession

Yesterday it emerged that the Prime Minister's press secretary had been the object of Nicola Pagett's erotic obsession. Glenda Cooper analyses.

"I fell in love with The Stranger's face. I looked at a man's face and into his eyes on a screen and I believed him. If it doesn't begin it can never end! That's what I wrote to him."

So Nicola Pagett, the former *Upstairs, Downstairs* actress, bravely chronicles in her autobiography the beginning of her descent into obsessive mania depression as she falls in love and becomes obsessed with a man she sees on TV whom she nicknames "The Stranger".

Yesterday it was claimed that The Stranger was in fact the Prime Minister's press secretary, Alastair Campbell. As

her disorder worsened, Pagett wrote hundreds of letters to him, sent him a cheque for £500 and under the delusion that it was his instruction, falsely accused her husband of having an incestuous relationship with their 15-year-old daughter and feeding her heroin.

Psychologists agree that the roots of obsession are to be found in all of us. "There is a normal side to this," says Professor Petruska Clarkson, consultant psychologist at the University of London, who feels that because of a paucity of research we often have difficulty diagnosing the disorder.

But what is the appeal of the famous? "If you're going to have a fantasy lover, you're going to go for someone famous because you simply want the best," reasons Dr Nias. "Famous people have got something going for them – they're beautiful, successful and powerful, not the shabbily dressed people we see every day."

Professor Clarkson, who has

specialised in the psychology of celebrity added: "Famous people represent for us our dreams, our hopes, our aspiration, our wishes, our fantasies. People project their aspirations onto the famous and make them larger than life. It's a very complex relationship."

"Famous people are the carriers of our projections. We aspire to be like them – we

would like to be as beautiful, successful, acclaimed as they are. That's the positive side. The negative side is that people invest in the famous so much that they cannot live their own lives. They become a vicious projection for us. And in cases like those of John Lennon and Jodie Foster it can become very destructive."

Their sheer recurrent visi-

That's what we went through with Diana. Someone said: "I've seen more pictures of Diana than I'll ever see of my mother."

What makes people progress from the harmless crush to full-blown obsession and delusion is difficult to say, but Professor Clarkson believes that it is a combination of predisposition, the environment in which you grew up and life stressors you may be experiencing. On top of that, many are more vulnerable after suffering a loss: "People who have lost a child or suffered a shock or a bereavement – the delusion can serve to fill the space."

Someone who has suffered an obsession is the radio disc jockey Mike Read. He was the subject of the attentions of a woman who has now changed her name to Blue Tulip Rose Read and believes she is married to him. He says he copes with those who have pursued him by trying to distance him-

self from it. "It comes with the job, but lots of jobs have far worse downsides. It doesn't really bother me, although it can be disturbing when when you're eating lunch and realise that people are watching you. Or they send photographs of your driveway and you realise they've been there and been all over your house while you were out. I think you just have to keep remembering that it's not their fault. They are not bad people."

Dr Nias thinks that more research must be done into delusional disorders so that we can begin to understand and treat them.

"For someone suffering from delusions it's like the most important love affair ever," says Dr Nias. "The preoccupation of being in love is the tragedy of it. What should be the most fantastic experience of your life ends up being the most tragic."



Nicola Pagett and Alastair Campbell. He became the focus of her existence

Joy is 120

ANDREW BROWN

### The others will have bare feet, the Queen will wear white socks...

The Queen faces an awkward problem as she approaches the Golden Temple in Amritsar later this month. It is not whether to apologise for the massacre there in 1919, when British troops fired on a peaceful demonstration and killed 379 people. It is not even whether to mention the more recent killings there, when Indian army troops fought their way into the holiest shrine of Sikhism, killing a thousand people. It is whether she should wear socks.

The Golden Temple, like all Sikh gurdwaras, may not be profaned with shoes. This is a general rule in Eastern religions: shoes are not worn in mosques or Hindu temples. Everyone, whether monarch or Archbishop of Canterbury, removes his shoes on entry. The trouble comes with socks: though religiously acceptable to wear them in a temple, can it ever be sartorially correct to wear them on a state visit?

If Her Majesty takes my advice, she will shun socks: there are recesses of my self-esteem still quivering from the day 25 years ago when a friend was married in the Woking Mosque, and I realised too late that I had donned odd socks that morning: one bright orange and the other viridian. All through the ceremony I found people looking at me; and looked down in embarrassment, only to find that in place of a pair of reassuring, non-judgmental socks, there were these screaming colours accusing me of pretentiousness at the top of their voices.

There are entire Royal households arranged to prevent such things happening to Queens, but you can never be quite certain. I imagine there is some noble, fitted by centuries of breeding to the post, who is keeper of the Queen's sock drawer. Perhaps the post is given to the youngest child of the Mistress of the Wardrobe – it would be cheaper than a dukedom. But is the man ready for his task on October 15, when the Queen will visit the temple? Will he not be weakened by years of purely ceremonial duties, like the Welsh Guards on board Sir Galahad, and crumple when told to select the socks that all the world will see? The strain, the responsibility, are too much for anyone to bear. Besides, the Golden Temple is not designed for socks. The floors are marble, and there are ample foot-washing facilities.

Yet can Her Majesty appear without socks? The last time a member of the royal family had her toes photographed does not make an encouraging omen. Could the mystique of royalty survive the sight of a 70-year-old pair of bare feet, even if no Sikh socks them? Kiti Kelley may have made a fortune by inviting us into the confidences of the royal gynaecologist but I don't think that there will be much demand for the privileged viewpoint of the royal chiropodist.

Socks are safer. Pondering these matters, Her Majesty's advisers must surely have considered, and rejected, the option of tights. Even if she knows what they are – and I find it difficult to imagine that the monarchy has modernised itself to such an extent that she does – they are lethal on marble floors. One slip and you're sitting on your royal arse, surrounded by the ruins of a state visit.

The preferred compromise is that Her Majesty should wear white socks, while no one else in the party does. These discussions are still shrouded in secrecy, as her socks will be. It is all rather sad, especially when you consider what a simple solution was available to the foreign office in its difficult negotiations with the Temple authorities: we could simply have sent Tony Blair instead, and watched him dodge stuffy old protocol as he ran boyish and dry-shod across the surrounding lake, then walked through the temple, his shoes a reverent inch above the ground.

## The 'global player' who was too British for Wall Street



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The collapse of BT's ambition to be the world's leading phone company matters to all of us, not because it will affect the price of a phone call (it probably won't much), but because it raises the question of whether Britain needs companies which are global players to succeed in the global economy. Is what is good for BT good for Britain? This is a large question, and the cancellation of the merger between BT and the American giant MCI requires Labour's modernisers to clarify the answers they have given so far.

Five years ago now, Gordon Brown set out the principles of what he called the New Economics. Drawing heavily on the thinking of Robert Reich, President Clinton's first Labor Secretary, the then shadow chancellor argued that nations could only "add value" by the skill, ingenuity and enterprise of their workforces. Mr Reich's premise was that the large companies which dominate capitalism are footloose and unpatriotic: they owe no loyalty to a

country, and will pursue the maximisation of profit regardless of national boundaries. A company could be headquartered in Detroit or London, carry out all its manufacturing in Korea or Vietnam, do its accounting in India and hold its accounts in the Cayman Islands. The only way in such a global economy for the government of one nation to develop a competitive advantage and retain the benefits for its people is to improve their skills, because workers are less mobile than capital and corporations. This was a new style of thinking for the centre-left, and for New Labour it provided the intellectual rationale for the abandonment of Bennite "socialism in one country" a decade earlier. But it was highly simplistic, and in key respects - as the BT/MCI debacle shows - simply wrong.

The fact that MCI has been swooped upon by a rival American company, WorldCom, is suggestive of the chauvinism of American finance. It turns out that

the free market is not as blind to borders as Mr Reich thought. The idea that a huge American telephone company should be taken over by a foreign one - never mind that BT speaks English - did not appeal to Wall Street. The New York markets preferred one of their own, the fast-talking Bernard Ebbers, whose WorldCom may be a quarter the size of BT, but which was more or less created as a corporate vehicle by the Manhattan investment banks.

Strategically, Mr Ebbers is pursuing the same vision as BT's Sir Iain Vallance, one of Tony Blair's favourite business leaders. Mr Ebbers says he wants MCI in order to build a global player in a world telecoms market which will be dominated by a small number of mega-corporations. That was Sir Iain's cunning plan, too, but it seems that international finance - that is, predominantly American finance - is prepared to gear up the cash for it if the global player wears an American shirt.

Messrs Brown and Blair cannot com-

plain too loudly, however, because they never really believed in the full version of Robert Reich's analysis. In practice, a strong streak of British nationalism has run through their relations with business. They did not like it when Rover was sold to BMW, and although they have promoted the slogan of "Conservative orthodoxy" in the matter of "not picking winners" they have promoted the global ambitions of both BT and British Airways.

The similarities between the two cases are instructive: telecoms and airlines are two industries which are still emerging from state control and national regulation, and which have been strongly influenced by the rebirth of the "big is beautiful" doctrine in business.

In the case of BT, it was Labour, not the Tories, which accepted the argument that less competition at home was a price worth paying for a "global player" wearing a British shirt. Mr Blair referred again, in his big speech this week, to his deal with

BT to get every school on to the information superhighway. For him, it seems, BT is our General Motors, and there is an identity of interests between company and corporation. That may smack of Fifties corporatism, but there is as much truth in it as in the Reich model: BT is a British company, with a British workforce and a physical network in this country which may be part of a global network, but which anchors it here.

The question then is: what is good for BT? There were sufficient doubts about the MCI merger to suggest that it was in the interest of BT shareholders and customers to call it off. Mr Blair's mistake lay not in his support for BT, but in backing a strategy for the company which was over-ambitious, reflecting Sir Iain's lust for a leading role on the world stage. It is not surprising that Mr Blair felt an affinity with him, but politicians should stay on the right side of the line between picking winners and backing proven success.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor  
and include a daytime telephone number.  
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.  
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.  
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### Cost of night surgery

Sir: Your report "Night shift surgeons will cut the wait" (29 September) implies that it is the trust hospitals that are struggling to meet waiting lists. While some trusts may indeed be behind on contract, the real root of the problem is the failure to provide adequate resources to enable NHS hospitals to meet their local needs.

This is because most purchasing authorities are themselves cash-strapped and many first wave GP fund-holders seem intent on diverting NHS resources away from NHS hospitals and into the private sector. The problem arose because the previous government chose to expend millions supporting an internal pseudo-market with all the attendant management costs, rather than spend it on direct patient care. While the new government is keen to cut "red tape", it will not achieve this by amalgamating trusts if it does not first amalgamate purchasing authorities and rationalise the waste of resources there.

A disproportionate number of staff appear to have been channelled into primary care. While some of these health prevention measures may take 30 years to take effect, people still need their hernias and gall-bladders operated on.

The Rapid Response Unit in Bradford last year showed the way forward. Vast numbers of patients can be processed, with all grades of staff being remunerated reasonably for use of their spare time. But at the end of the day creating additional capacity in the evenings or weekends costs extra money.

Is the Government equal to the task of reversing unnecessary consumption in managerial terms, halting the exodus of cash into the private sector and as a result giving all our NHS hospitals what they need to provide an effective, sustainable capacity to meet the growing long-term need?

Dr PETER KNAPPETT  
Director of Critical Care  
Bradford Royal Infirmary

Sir: As a former clinical director of theatre services, I was intrigued to read your report on the possibility of operating around the clock (29 September). Although it very tempting to "sweat the assets" of an



expensive, high-tech resource, such an approach is not possible in the current economic climate for a number of reasons.

First, there are not enough beds to put the patients in. Secondly, there are significant problems with retention and recruitment of appropriately qualified theatre personnel. Thirdly, it is doubtful that there would be sufficient numbers of anaesthetists to cover the sessions and finally, there are not enough surgeons to go round.

There is no doubt that it makes sense to make more efficient use of a very expensive facility - a notion that might be expanded to the development of "twilight" clinics or more extensive weekend working. To pursue this path, however, without addressing the need for extra resources is short-sighted in the extreme.

GRAEME URWIN, FRCS  
Consultant Urological Surgeon  
York

### Workplace tragedies

Sir: We were delighted to read *The Independent's* front page report about disasters and corporate killing (2 October). Many of our members have been directly affected by these terrible tragedies and others.

Twenty thousand people have been killed in workplace accidents and disasters in the 30 years since the Aberfan tragedy and there has been only one successful prosecution for corporate manslaughter. The present situation, which treats corporate financial crime more seriously than corporate negligence, is intolerable.

The Law Commission's proposals for new offences of corporate killing are an important step forward in our campaign for greater corporate responsibility. The detail of the proposals is still being reviewed; we would additionally like to see consideration given to the powers and

actions of the investigative teams and to sentencing policy.

We look forward to a time when a corporation's actions are tempered by the knowledge that it will be held fully responsible for the consequences, a situation society already expects of individuals. We hope that the Government gives parliamentary time to convert its good intentions into legislation.

PAMELA DIX  
Vice-Chairman  
Disaster Action  
Woking, Surrey

### Archimedes' principle

Sir: The editor of a broadsheet newspaper such as *The Independent* claims it necessary to print a letter (29 September) explaining Archimedes' principle says more about the state of education in the UK than any number of Ofsted reports.

DAVID SMITH  
Tatsfield, Kent

### Roots of violence

Sir: Abdul Hakin Murad (letter, 25 September) claims that there is no "Ulster-style religious violence" between religious groups in Malaysia.

I had the pleasure of sharing a flat with three non-Muslim Malaysians for a year. One was ethnically Chinese, and the other two were Christian Ibans from Sarawak state.

While there is currently no such violence in Malaysia that I know of, that doesn't mean that there won't be. Inter-group strife is based on inter-group intolerance and discrimination, and my flatmates seemed to feel that this was the way of things in "confidently Muslim" Malaysia.

Many of Mr Murad's points were well taken, but I suspect he is falling into the trap shared by the powerful all over the world. As a white South African, I have seen at close

range the arrogance that makes it all too easy to believe that there is no problem in the powerful exercising their power to exclude those not of their own tribe from the status of equal in human importance. Such people can often be heard complaining bitterly when they wake up in the middle of an era of Ulster-style violence, and cannot understand that the roots of the day's events lie in their own actions and inaction in the past.

CHRIS HIGH  
Sutton St Nicholas  
Hertfordshire

### Child sexual abuse

Sir: Your two articles on child sexual abuse (1 October) pose something of a conundrum. Psychiatrists argue about the validity of recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse ("Abuse claims may be false memories") whilst thousands of paedophiles are apparently advertising on the Internet.

D S HOSKINS  
Edinburgh

Class barriers

Sir: Because people change classes ("Barriers break as Britain embraces upward mobility", 25 September) does not mean that class is dead. It is alive and is the decisive influence on a Briton's chances in life.

CHRIS HIGH

To be born on a run-down council estate and educated at a comprehensive, where the teachers are condemned to cope with the consequences of generations of social neglect and damned when they fail, is a ticket to a life in the underclass.

The few who make it up the greasy pole are to be admired, but their success does not affect the fate of their contemporaries.

D S HOSKINS  
Edinburgh

### Sheltered policy

Sir: I stood yesterday waiting for the Number 53 bus to take me home to Cheltenham. I shared my wait with a large, slow-moving, tail-to-tail traffic jam and, to my dismay, a rather larger, but not so slow-moving, dark grey, bulging cloud.

When the Government finally gets round to sorting its "fully integrated transport policy", I do hope they don't forget the bus shelters!

SIMON J HIGSON  
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

I met an antique salesman in Notting Hill, who tried to charge me £45 for a book ...



MILES  
KINGTON

For a long time I lived in Notting Hill near Portobello Road, and discovered what many weekend visitors never discover - that the life of Portobello Road is not limited to the Saturday antiques market. There is an active fruit and veg market all week long. There are many specialist shops selling jazz records or bicycles. And quite a few of the antique shops stay open during the week as well.

It was in one of these that I spotted a novel I wanted to buy. It's unusual to find books in antique shops, but this particular one had a large bookcase full of them. Maybe the man had initially bought the bookcase then started filling the case with books; maybe he had bought some furniture at an auction and

the books had come with it; whatever the reason, he had a case full of books and one of them was the novel I wanted to buy. I can't remember what it was called. It was one of those obscure Victorian novels by female authors called "Mrs" on the spine, and the only reason I wanted to buy it was that, attracted by its handsome leather binding, I had dipped into it and found it quite amusing.

The price was not decipherable, being written in that antique trade shorthand which allows the seller to utter any price he wishes. The price the owner uttered was £45. "£45!" I spluttered. "It's hardly worth £10. This novel is a forgotten author. This novel is a forgotten novel. Nobody would want to buy this."

"I'm pricing it for the binding," he said. "Don't care about the book. Might be *The Good Hotel Guide* 1886, for all I care." "Well, I'm making you an offer for the reading matter." I said. "I'll give you £20." "£20?"

The fact that the man didn't even come down a bit indicated that he didn't like the look of me and didn't want his book to fall into the hands of someone who was going to soil the pages with his eyes so I departed. What the man didn't know was that I lived just around the corner, so every time I went that way to get fruit and veg, or my bike mended, or a specialist jazz record, I used to pop in to the bookshop to look at the book, by which I

mean read it. There is no law against reading a book in a bookshop. It's just time-consuming, that's all. My daughter used to work in the Travel Bookshop just down the road, and she said it was not uncommon for people to come in with pen and paper to plan their holidays, getting down all the guide books, copying out the relevant data, and leaving without a word of thanks ...

By reading a few pages at a time I gradually got well into the book, which was not nearly as bad as it might have been, and it got to the stage where I could not always remember where I had read it. so I actually left a bus ticket the book as a bookmark. I don't think I have ever done this before or since, but you must remember that I was

doing this as much in protest against the exorbitant price as in order to read the book. The process of reading was accompanied by haggling as well. Every time I went in and read a chunk, I would say, "How much is this?" and he would tell me the price. The price started to change. He came down to £40, then £35. My offer, however, did not rise to meet his in the time-honoured way of haggling. I thought I had started too high at £20, so I started putting my offer down as well, and we got to a stage where he was asking £30 and I was down to £12.

I think this was the point at which he started his guerrilla warfare. It wasn't very serious. He merely started moving the book around to different places

so that I couldn't find it. This was hopeless, as there was only the one bookcase in the shop. Then he started moving my bookmark around in the book, sometimes trying to kid me that I had only read 50 pages, sometimes trying to convince me that I was nearly at the end. I never got upset by this. I merely flipped through the book until I found the right spot, and started using a secondary bookmark: a fine toothpick, which he never spotted. He kept on moving the bus ticket around, while I went straight to my toothpick.

Came the day when I finally finished the book, at which point you might think that I would call off my visits. Not at all. I had come to enjoy my little invasions so much, and the half-hearted haggling, that I still

called in to look at the book and to shift the bookmark around. By the time the notice appeared in the shop window "Closing Down Sale - Everything Must Go" I had got him down to £20, and was offering £5. "You're moving?" I said. "Going out of town," he replied tersely. Tersely was how we always conversed.

"You never did sell that binding," I said. "Pity you couldn't find a taker." He took it down and looked at it. Then, with great pain, he spoke. "You can have it for a fiver." I took it from his hands and stroked the pages. The book for which I had been prepared to pay £20 - now mine for a fiver! "No, thanks," I said. "I've already read it."

مكتبة من الأصل

## Sing the cosy old tunes – then get down to business

DONALD  
MACINTYRE  
BLAIR'S  
PROGRESS

Earlier this week in a tennis club close to Brighton, three innocently changing sportsmen were astounded to come face to face with a near naked Tony Blair freshly sweating from the courts. With a nonchalant wave of his hand the – currently – most popular leader in the developed world said a different "Hi, guys" and stepped into the shower. Utterly stunned, the unplanned reception committee let towels and bars of soap slip to the floor as they stared like zombies at the prime ministerial apparition. At least one recovered sufficiently to utter the strangled "All right, mate". What they said when they got home, and if anyone believed them, is not recorded.

For all the trappings of power, Tony Blair isn't at all behaving like the presidential figure his Tory critics claim he wants to be. He is in high good humour, confident and focused as ever. But *solic de grandeur* is not among his faults. Those who have talked to him privately say that, far from letting his astonishing poll ratings go to his head, he regards them as unreal, almost depressing. He continues to warn his colleagues first, that the conference message of "hard choices" ahead means the Government is bound to grow much less popular in the coming months. Second, he cautions that the Government's popularity only counts when it reflects a solid record of achievement. And he believes the party understands that better at the end of the week than at the beginning.

It isn't that difficult to amass evidence to the contrary. The union leaders who queued up after Gordon Brown's speech to press for pay settlements showed every sign of failing to absorb the Chancellor's blunt message that the Government would ruthlessly put control of inflation and spending above the demands for pay increases; help for those without jobs in preference to rises for those who have them.

The national executive elections have been greeted by the left as evidence of its increased popularity within the party. The standing ovation for Barbara Castle's attack on the Government's pensions policy on Wednesday symbolises the extent to which the old-time religion of Labour still strikes a chord with the faithful. All the big three of the Cabinet, Gordon Brown, John Prescott and Robin Cook, used language on occasions that shamelessly played to those old Labour susceptibilities.

Superficially then, you can make a strong argument that the party hasn't really changed. But the counter-case is stronger. First, in whatever the language they clothe it, the messages from Prescott and Brown were uncompromisingly modernising. Prescott's big speech of the week, a har-

storming demolition of the case for renationalising Railtrack, showed the Deputy Prime Minister at his formidable best in championing Blair's approach to government. The Mo Mowlams, the Harriet Harman, the David Blunketts, the Jack Cunningham, the Jack Straws made speeches which were thoroughly New Labour in form as well as content.

There will be a reshuffle, perhaps as late as next summer, perhaps earlier. When it does happen, some ministers will leave the Cabinet and perhaps the Government. But Blair is impressed by his most talented and decisive ministers. And the union leaders, who anyway show rather more understanding of the realities of government policy in private chats with ministers than, tiresomely, they do in public, are making a big mistake if they think for a second that Brown and his rising chief secretary, Alastair Darling, will regard this week's conference as other than a mandate for the toughest of approaches to public sector pay. Whatever the turbulence it causes.

There is also rather less to the NEC results than meets the eye. Skinner is a genuinely popular figure in the party, a lovable fragment of its heritage. Blair's own constituency of Sedgefield voted for Skinner. But if it thought that Skinner was coming within a mile of influencing the direction of the government Sedgefield would be utterly horrified. It also remains clear that the anti-Mandelson vote was not anti-modernisation. Blair told Mandelson some time before the halftop results that he thought it would be good for him if he lost. He certainly regarded the endless publicity his trusted lieutenant attracted over August as a real problem, believing that it would have been better for Mandelson to fight, if he was going to fight at all, simply on his record in an outstanding election campaign. He meant everything he said on Wednesday about Mandelson's talents. But he also made it clear to him that humility, dealing with people, and not becoming the story, matter too. If Mandelson learns this lesson he should have the career ahead of him implied by Blair on Wednesday.

Blair is confident, not without reason, that the party, especially not exclusively its swelled ranks of younger members, continued to warm to him this week. This is not just because of the size of the victory but because he feels like hearing a leader who expresses enduring Labour goals in language which speaks to those without tribal roots in Labour. There is every sign that the party still likes listening to the old music hall tunes. But there's also every sign that's what members increasingly, however affectionately, regard them as music hall tunes.

On Tuesday, Blair struck a series of bargains not only with his party but with the wider electorate: to take two prime examples health and education will get, in the long run, the funds they need. But the price will be real reform, of delivery standards, of administration, of structure. Bad teachers will be sacked, education authorities bypassed, precious demarcations between health service professionals painfully eradicated. There will be anguish inside Labour as well as outside it. Rivalries and tension within the Cabinet, already being exacerbated by competition for scarce resources as well as conflicts of personality, will undoubtedly increase. The going will be rough. There is turbulence ahead. Seats should be fastened now. But Blair is confident the flightpath is now clear.



Not just poor, but an 'underclass', spoken of as if they were an entirely different species, a lumpen mass

Photograph: Craig Easton

## King Tony, look over the palace gates

SUZANNE  
MOORE  
ON LABOUR  
DO-GOODING

For some time I have been expecting the announcement. Clearly Charles is too old and William is too young and there is no other viable option. I can just see Blair, humility oozing from every pore, his voice cracking with emotion, telling conference: "Aw, guys, you know I never really wanted to do this but as the people have spoken, I guess it's my duty. Yes, I will become King." The coronation of the Lion King cannot be far off and King Tony, the moderniser's moderniser, may as well become monarch if we believe what we read in the papers.

Actually I am hoping that the New Downing Street Social Exclusion Unit does home visits because I feel socially and spiritually excluded from not only the style but the contents of this week's conference. Only three things have cheered me up: Tony Banks' crimes against good taste; Mandelson's little disappointment; and the fact that the only person who finds Alastair Campbell attractive is a paranoid manic depressive in the grip of a wild delusion.

With the media largely operating as cheerleaders for the Government, it is easy enough to think that the people's politician holds the nation in his hands, that, though there may be the odd hiccup, everything is going to plan. Is this really the case? The overwhelming relief that the Tories have gone is being read as overwhelming support for everything this Labour government does. But it is not the same thing at all.

There is a strong sense of politics happening elsewhere. Even the TV pundits seem to admit it. After Diana they are less smug than before about what really matters...

"I'll be asking Mark Mardell [Newsnight's political correspondent] why he bothers," declared a languid Paxman in a TV studio in Brighton this week. He was referring to the lack of conflict at the conference. This could be spun as a sign of the new inclusive politics. After all, isn't it an indication of maturity that we all now agree with each other and the Government about everything?

Well, no it isn't. For while the popular will and "the people" are invoked over and over again, this is a process taking place from the top down and not the bottom up.

This is nowhere more evident than in the discussions about poverty, about which we are all suddenly dreadfully concerned. The language of these discussions is entirely that of Charles Murray's "underclass" theory. He made no secret of the fact that the underclass were scum. Sonowinstead of poor people being people without enough money we now talk confidently of the underclass as though they were

an entirely different species, a lumpen mass. They live in "anti-social neighbourhoods", according to Blair's speech, and they are just desperate for a hit of do-gooding.

Murray also wrote of the rise of "the rabble" and the "New Victorians" and there is something horribly Victorian about the way in which these debates on poverty proceed: "the poor" may at times be divided into bite-size chunks – single mothers, pensioners, the long-term unemployed – but there remains little understanding of the poor as people, let alone citizens.

Work – low-paid, part-time, unstimulating work – is the great cure-all. From work, we are expected to believe everything else will flow – self-esteem, educational achievement, a more stable family life. Yet it is the changing nature of work that is largely responsible for the breakdown of older forms of family life in the first place.

The fundamental changes that have resulted in the negotiation between men and women of new roles for themselves isn't being addressed.

Talking of "the poor" or "the underclass" also ignores the play of gender throughout our lives. Women move in and out of poverty in different ways from men because their relationship to the employment market is not the same.

Yet for all this government's "radicalism", the parameters of this debate are very narrow. Redistribution, already ruled out, is only ever talked of in terms of the tax system. There are other ways to look at this. Many of these ideas are coming from outside the Labour Party which, while preaching self-sufficiency, exists alongside a realm

where these ideals are actually practised – namely, DIY, direct-action politics. Those involved in such politics are doing the things the Government talks of so wishfully. They are trying to take responsibility and control over their lives and many of them have the time to do so precisely because they are unemployed.

Some of "the people" involved so many times this week by the Labour Party will have little faith in this government or any government to represent them. That does not mean they do not recognise that many issues that will impact on their lives will be decided by Parliament. It's just that they cannot accept that the only agenda worth having is the one set by the Government, even, praise their souls, this one. Money in your pocket contributes to the quality of life but other things such as fulfilling work, a clean environment and a lively community also figure in surveys that ask people what defines a decent standard of living.

Denise Searle's book, *Gathering Force DIY Culture – Radical Action for the Third of Waking*, sees the issue of land as "the underlying factor lurking beneath the surface of many single issues" from homelessness to the rebuilding of communities to the loss of public space to the destruction of the countryside, the insecurity of home-

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## The message is: 'Washington to Planet Earth, Get Lost'

RUPERT  
CORNWELL  
AMERICAN  
ARROGANCE

Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. The third time is enemy action. So wrote the late Ian Fleming, and so may the rest of us be forgiven for thinking, when contemplating a few of the latest manifestations of US foreign policy. To the untrained eye, the James Bond superpower which delights in identifying villains on the international stage ("rogue states" as they are known in State Department vernacular) is behaving exactly like one.

For proof, consider not three, but four recent examples. Powerful lobbies in Washington could yet prevent the country signing – and thus destroy – the planned global climate treaty that would lower pollution emissions. Last month, American opposition may have consigned an international agreement to ban landmines to a similar fate. Blending dollops of self-righteousness with pleas of impotence in the face of Congressional opposition, the US bulls endlessly at paying its dues to the United Nations. Now it is in another minority of one, trying to extend the reach of its national laws to prevent the sovereign states of France, Russia and Malaysia signing a development deal with Iran.

Now, on each individual count apologists can mount a more or less plausible defence. After all, was not the European Commission at least as "extra-

territorial" when it demanded – and secured – changes in the merger between Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas, which surely was none of its business? Then again, is not an exemption justified if its mines guard South Korea's borders with the North, arguably the most dangerous frontier on earth? Maybe industrial gases aren't responsible for global warming. And few would dispute America's complaints about bureaucracy and incompetence at the UN. Cumulatively, however, one overwhelming impression remains: "Washington to Planet Earth, Get Lost."

In a sense of course, the sentiment is not entirely new. Famously, the opposite polar forces behind American foreign policy are idealism and isolationism, the alternating convictions that America must either mend the world, or stay out of it. Both flow from the doctrine of American "exceptionalism", that is, a country unique in origin and conceived by God for a special moral, and moralising, purpose.

These days, moreover, the exceptionalism embraces economics, and the unqualified triumph, in US eyes at least, of the American model of hard-nosed free-market capitalism, so messianically and maddeningly proclaimed by President Clinton to his fellow heads of government at the recent G-7

summit in Denver. Strong growth, low inflation, high employment, innovative dynamism, US officials brag: you name it, we've got it. The dollar is strong and the Asian tigers have been defanged. And what's that fuss in Europe about budget deficits of 3 per cent? We're heading for a budget surplus in 1998. American exceptionalism? More like American arrogance.

If so, however, it is an arrogance born of weakness – not of the country's position in the world outside, but of its internal political system. Some of the frictions are inevitable. Led by America, the West won the Cold War – but that victory removed the overarching reason for Western solidarity. Once the ultimate guarantee of Europe's obedience to its patron superpower, the American nuclear umbrella is no longer of paramount importance. But the true problem lies within.

Today there is no such thing as a coherent American foreign policy, rather an array of series of gestures to various interest groups. This is not to demand what George Bush once plaintively called "the vision thing", a strategic concept of world affairs, of Kissingerian sweep. But it does require an end to a policy of pandering, and Mr Clinton's reflex of acting to please the immediate audience. He may plead the problems of

the world's patience will surely be exhausted at paying America's bills at the UN, and at a Secretary of State's mixture of pleading and bullying, that "we're sorry we can't pay – but either shut up or put up". In the

case of extraterritorial sanctions against "rogue states" (as the State Department were the only valid judge of such offenders), the position is even clearer cut. They simply don't work. And the losers are not only the American companies whose competitors snap up exports and markets that were once their.

Washington, too, suffers from policies that merely undermine their avowed goals. In Cuba, nothing has been done to keep Fidel Castro in power than the nationalism and anti-Americanism fuelled by 35 years of sanctions designed to unseat him. In going ahead with the gas agreement, France, Russia and Iran itself all gain strength from being perceived to stand up to American bullying. Small wonder that the Clinton Administration is groping for a face-saving formula that would avoid confrontation with old allies, and keep the doorajar for better relations with what may be a less antagonistic regime in Teheran.

Ever agile, Mr Clinton will doubtless find his formula. But old allies are dissolving, to be replaced by new rivals – over jobs and, probably, over the euro if the planned single currency challenges the dollar's supremacy in the world monetary arena. Today's events offer little hope of accommodation.

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## J. G. Links

Joseph Gluckstein Links, art historian: born London 13 December 1904; OBE 1946; married 1945 Mary Luytens (one stepdaughter); died London 1 October 1997.

It is improbable that anyone who was self-taught today would be acknowledged by the art-historian world as the expert in his field. Without any formal training, J. G. Links became the world expert on Canaletto, a notoriously difficult painter to date. Even though he thought of himself more as a cataloguer than an art historian, Links achieved this while maintaining total integrity, modesty and a delight in life.

Links found Canaletto "endlessly fascinating" and wrote several books about him; *Views of Venice* by Canaletto, engraved by Antonio Visentini, was published in 1971; *Canaletto in 1976*; and *Canaletto and his Patrons* in 1977. Links helped with the exhibition at the Queen's Gallery in 1980, where he was able to examine many Canalettos in detail for

the first time. The big Canaletto exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1989 was conceived by Links and made possible by his encyclopaedic knowledge; the loan of 70 paintings from private collections, many of which had never been seen in public, was due to his contacts and enthusiasm.

He was born in north London in 1904; his father was a Jewish refugee from Hungary who had started the fur business Calman Links. His mother died before he was 13 years old and he had to leave school aged 14; his father had become ill and wanted to teach him the fur trade before he died. "I was an unwilling and sullen pupil," he wrote, but he later appreciated not having to make a decision about a career. "There was the business and I jolly well had to go and earn my living at it."

Although he thought of himself as a bad salesman, he made the business more upmarket: his father had mostly traded in skunk skins, eventually becoming a director of the Hudson's Bay Company and

gaining the royal warrant as the Queen's furrier. In 1956 Links wrote a book on the subject, *The Book of Fur*.

In the 1930s he published a series of crime dossiers with Dennis Wheatley, with whom he shared a love, and great knowledge, of fine German wine. These books, including *Here with the Clues!* (1939) and *The Malinsay Massacre* (1938), with manually inserted "clues" for the reader, were phenomenally popular and were reissued in the 1980s.

During the Second World War Links was a Wing Commander in the RAF working on barrage balloons in the Air Ministry. Through his war work he met Robert Luytens, son of the architect Sir Edwin Luytens, and through him his sister Mary, whom Links married in 1945. Their honeymoon was spent on a troopship going to New York. When his new wife objected to this as a rather unromantic honeymoon, they tried Venice as a more suitable option.

On this first visit to Venice they both became "hooked for

life". They followed in the footsteps of John Ruskin with *The Stones of Venice* and, after that, for 30 years went to Venice two or three times every year. In the late Sixties Links became involved in the establishment of the Venice in Peril Fund, set up to help prevent the buildings of Venice from crumbling into its lagoon and remained a prime mover and fund-raiser.

The interest which he developed in both Canaletto and Ruskin grew out of his passion for Venice; in 1962 Mary gave him a copy of W.G. Constable's new monograph on Canaletto in which Constable had noted a missing painting which Links recognised as the painting hanging over his sister-in-law's fireplace. He and Constable started a correspondence and, when Constable came to England, he asked Links whether he would take over the second edition of the book; it took him six years rather than the six months Constable had anticipated and *Canaletto* was published in 1976.

Links's friends constantly asked for advice before they went to Venice; he wrote them letters describing what to see and do, which, with his characteristic generosity, he enjoyed doing, until one friend, the publisher Max Reinhardt, of Bodley Head, suggested turning this advice into a book. So his best-loved book, *Venice for Pleasure* (1966), originated, described by Bernard Levin as "Not only the best guide-book to that city ever written, but the best guide-book to any city ever written". A fifth expanded edition was published in 1994. Links also wrote *The Ruskins in Normandy* (1968), *Townscape Painting and Drawing* (1972) and *Travellers in Europe* (1980).

Links was extremely wise, versatile and able; he was always polite and worked hard all his life not to make an enemy. "I have had a very private life and I hope to go on being private for what's left of it," he said in 1989.

— Sarah Anderson



Links: in Venice for Pleasure author of 'the best guide-book to any city ever written'

## Bernard Hooper

Bernard Hooper, engineer and designer: born Birmingham 28 September 1928; married 1958 Pamela Millward (three sons); died Telford, Shropshire 14 September 1997.

Bernard Hooper was one of the most influential designers in the automotive and motorcycle industry, a talent largely unacknowledged because of the industrial confidentiality of his work.

His most lasting work was for Norton motorcycles, in the design and development of the 750 and 800cc Commando road models, which gave the company a period of high success, including winning the *Motor Cycle News* "Machine of the Year" poll from 1968 to 1972. His work with his fellow-designer at Norton Bob Trigg on the ingenious "isolastic" rubber engine mountings won them the Castrol Design Award in 1970.

The success of the Norton Commando as a machine can be gauged by its continued production today, on a built-to-order basis, by the Norvil

Motorcycle Company of Brownhills, Staffordshire.

Hooper was born in Birmingham and served an apprenticeship with Lucas Engineering there. From secret defence projects at the Ministry of Supply to the BSA (Birmingham Small Arms) motorcycle company in 1953, when that Birmingham industrial giant was the biggest maker in the world. His work on the ubiquitous BSA Bantam two-stroke model improved its performance and at the same time gave an insight into the conservatism that prevented new thinking having free rein, in a company that was typical of most in its determination to stay with proven and unexciting machines.

He moved in 1956 into a brief partnership with Hermann Meier and they worked on a development of the old Scott engine, itself still based on the original thinking of Alfred Angus Scott before the First World War. But the revival of the old Yorkshire company, Scott Motorcycles, in Birmingham faded and died before

Hooper and Meier's work could be realised.

In 1958, Hooper joined Villiers Engineering at Wolverhampton as their Chief Designer, and drew up the 250cc single-cylinder Starmaker engine, one of the most under-reduced British designs of the post-war period. Intended to give low-cost power for amateur riders in moto-cross, it went on to exceed its designer's brief with success in trials and even the Isle of Man TT races. Peter Ischley, a Villiers development engineer who raced in his spare time, fitted a Starmaker in a Spanish Bultaco chassis and finished third in the 1966 250cc TT, against established opposition from Japan and Italy. The Starmaker went on to be used by smaller British makers in racing machines and won numerous national championships.

Hooper rose to be Chief Designer and Engineer of the famous Norton name when it was absorbed, with Villiers, into the Manganese Bronze combine in 1966. But he was working on more advanced engine concepts than the limited Norton finance would allow for the Commando, including the rotary Wankel engine that enjoyed a brief spell of production in the late 1980s by the much-reduced Norton cars.

Hooper's real enthusiasm

was for his own double-diameter piston two-stroke design, the "Wulf", which was never put into production by Norton before they closed their Wolverhampton factory gates in 1977. In a brief but enthusiastic sit-in the workforce approached Hooper and asked him to head a revived company.

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Hooper: engine design

Hooper and Meier's work could be realised.

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Hooper and Meier's work could be realised.



Trampler: innate warmth and musicianship

Photograph: Peter Schaf

## Walter Trampler

Walter Trampler, violinist: born Munich 25 August 1915; four times married (one son, and one daughter deceased); died Port Joli, Nova Scotia 28 September 1997.

In 1994 the BBC honoured Walter Trampler with a memorable invitation concert at the Maida Vale Studios in London. Before an enraptured audience he performed an evening of 20th-century viola repertoire.

During a break in the performance I had the pleasure of interviewing him about his career, and he captivated us all with wonderful stories of his musical life. One in particular is worth recounting. Stravinsky (who for some strange reason used to refer to Trampler as El Capitano) always arrived at recording sessions with two bottles of whisky – a superior malt for himself, and an inferior brand that he handed out to the musicians after work.

Trampler was born in Munich in 1915. He was taught initially as a violinist by his father, and later attended the State Academy of Music in Munich until 1934. At the age of 17 he was appointed violinist in the Struh Quartet, and a year later he regretted that his own Wulf two-stroke design was attracting attention from every branch of the automotive industry except the motorcycle one that saw him mature.

As Germany darkened under the threat of Nazism, Trampler (an ardent and outspoken poratory music, and was willing to take on and master the most complex techniques. One of my earliest memories of his playing was his RCA recording of Luciano Berio's *Chemins* 2, a fiendishly difficult work (written specially for him) displaying a constant tremolo viola texture. I remember Trampler's jokingly remarking that he had to practise on a vibrating machine to get in training weeks before a performance.

Although we lived many miles apart, we met frequently in New York, where I was always greeted by him and his wife Ruth with more than one very large dry Martini (a Trampler speciality). He was a man of immense style, elegance and culture. This extended well beyond his musical activities, and could be seen in the surroundings of his beautiful Manhattan apartment, and in the renovated colonial church he transformed into a magnificent home in upstate New York.

With his death in his beloved Nova Scotia, the musical world has lost one of the last surviving links of a great European-American performing tradition. Thankfully he made many legendary recordings during his lifetime. For me, perhaps the greatest were the performances of the two late Brahms violin sonatas, which he recorded with Mieczyslaw Horszowski. It was playing of innate warmth and musicianship, a sound that will be with me for ever.

— Simon Bainbridge

## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

### Forthcoming marriages

Mr S. Matthews and Miss R. J. Quinell. The engagement is announced between Scott, elder son of Mr and Mrs Murray Matthews, of Chichester, and Becky, daughter of Dr and Mrs Philip Quinell, of Chichester.

BIRTHDAYS

The Earl of Bradford, restaurateur; Sir Stephen Brown, president of the Family Division, a former Lord Justice of Appeal; 73; Mr Chubby Checker, rock singer; 56; Mr John Craxton, artist; 75; Lord Denham, former Lord-in-Waiting to the Queen; 76; Mr Roger Ellis, former Master of Golders Green Crematorium College; 66; Sir Terence English, cardiologist, radio surgeon and Master, St Catherine's College, Cambridge; 65; The Right Rev John Garton, suffragan Bishop of Plymouth; 65; Sir Roger Hervey, former ambassador to Mexico; 63; Lord Knights, former Chief Constable, West Midlands; 77; Mr William Newton Dunn, former MEP; 56; Sir Shridath Ramphal QC, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth; 69; Mr Steve Michael Reich, composer; 61; Viscount Sidmouth, former colonial officer; 83; Mr John Suthern, jockey; 46; Mr Gore Vidal, writer; 72.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Edward attended the celebrations anniversary of the Indian Ocean Crisis in Paris.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guards at Horse Guards, 11am.

## LAW REPORT: 3 OCTOBER 1997

### Resources irrelevant to duty to accommodate elderly

A local authority was entitled to take account of its limited financial resources in assessing whether an elderly person was in need of care and attention within the terms of section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948, but, once it had decided that the person was in such need, it was not entitled on financial grounds to refuse to perform the duty imposed upon it by section 21 to make arrangements for suitable accommodation to be available.

*Regan v Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council ex parte Help the Aged and others; Court of Appeal; 69; Mr Steve Michael Reich, composer; 61; Viscount Sidmouth, former colonial officer; 83; Mr John Suthern, jockey; 46; Mr Gore Vidal, writer; 72.*

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal against the decision of Mr Justice Jowitt (Law Report, 18 April 1997) that a council was entitled to take account of its limited financial resources in assessing whether an elderly person was in need of care and attention within the terms of section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 as amended to have regard to its limited financial resources; 2) whether, if its limited resources were relevant, they justified the policy

count of its own resources in considering an applicant's need for accommodation under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 and in deciding whether it was under a duty to provide such accommodation. *Richard Drabble QC, Helen Mountfield and Andrew Suddard (Public Law Project) for the appellants; Andrew Gibson QC and John Barrett (Council Solicitor) for the council.*

Lord Woolf MR said that the case raised three issues: 1) whether a local authority in deciding whether an elderly person was in need of care and attention, in which case it would be required to make arrangements for residential accommodation to be made available, was entitled under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948 as amended to have regard to its limited financial resources; 2) whether, if its limited resources were relevant, they justified the policy

between the date of the hearing before Jowitt J and the date of his judgment, the House of Lords had decided *v Gloucestershire County Council and anor ex p Barry* (Law Report 9 April 1997). That decision had clearly influenced the judge. He had not, however, had the benefit of argument as to its relevance to the present case.

The issue in *Barry* was whether a local authority could properly take account of its own financial resources when assessing the needs of a disabled person under 2(1) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. However, Sefton's policy was not to use its financial position to provide a standard against which to assess "need" but to defer consideration and payment, (because of its lack of resources) where it accepted that there was a need of care and attention.

Having regard to the rea-

soning in *Barry* it must be concluded that there was a limited subjective element in making the assessment whether the ailments of the person concerned did or did not collectively establish a need for care and attention. The first issue would therefore be determined in the affirmative.

Having, however, accepted that a person was in need of care and attention, Sefton were not entitled to say that because of their lack of resources they were not prepared to meet the duty placed on them by section 21. The second issue was whether an approach was inadmissible to the third issue, Sefton were not entitled to provide their own scale for judging a person's ability to pay for their own care. Any other approach was incompatible with the language of the relevant statutory provisions.

— Kate O'Hanlon, *Bamzler*

هذا من الأصل

## Bonuses on the line as BT rejects overtures from rival MCI bidder

British Telecom yesterday rejected the offer of talks from WorldCom, which has launched a \$30bn rival takeover bid for MCI, BT's US partner. It also emerged that BT executives will forfeit tens of millions of pounds in bonuses if the UK group's lower takeover bid for MCI fails. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, and Michael Horison report.



BT was last night refusing to admit defeat after it found its £13bn bid for MCI gazumped by WorldCom just weeks before the merger was to be completed. Senior executives at BT were said to be waiting for the outcome of an MCI board meeting, likely to take place as early as today.

Industry analysts raised the prospect that BT might accept the offer of three way discussions from Bernard Ebbes, WorldCom's chairman. But a BT spokesman emphatically ruled out the move. "This is a matter for MCI. Until WorldCom and MCI have spoken there isn't much we can do about it."

BT highlighted the difference between its bid, which includes \$4bn in cash, and

WorldCom's \$41.50 a share all paper offer. "We have a deal on the table which is signed, sealed and will soon be delivered. It is in shares and cash. WorldCom are offering paper," said the spokesman.

WorldCom again raised the prospect of discussions with BT if the rival merger plan went through. It would leave BT with a 10 per cent stake in MCI-WorldCom. Colin Williams, president of international operations, said: "They're welcome to remain a shareholder and they're welcome to see how we'd jointly address the world environment. The door is open. Whether BT walks through it is another question."

Sir Peter Bonfield, BT chief executive, and its new managing director Bill Cockburn, were in Brighton last night meeting

the Prime Minister Tony Blair. BT said Sir Peter would then be starting a pre-planned holiday abroad. "He's due a holiday and he'll be taking it. He deserves it."

BT shares rose a further 17.5p to 49.5p, as speculators who had piled into MCI shares in the US switched into BT stock.

The European Commission meanwhile said WorldCom's \$30bn offer would be investigated under its merger rules. "It's not been notified to us yet but at first glimpse it ought to be investigated. That seems obvious," said a spokesman for Karl van Miert, the competition commissioner.

Mr Williams said WorldCom's sales in Europe would be \$600m this year, but added that MCI had no European business at all. "In merger terms this deal adds nothing."

ing at all to our European business," he said.

It emerged that if the merger with MCI fails to take place, then a group of senior BT executives, led by Sir Peter, stand to lose out on incentive packages worth tens of millions of pounds.

Sir Peter is due a £500,000 one-off bonus if the deal is completed and will also be the biggest benefactor from a series of share bonus schemes that the merged company, Concert, would put in place. The various schemes could be worth as much as £3m to Sir Peter, who would become chief executive of the combined business.

About 200 BT executives will participate in the Concert global equity incentive portfolio, as it is known. Of these, about 60 will be eligible for a scheme under which they can receive up to two times their salary in shares provided Concert meets certain performance targets judged against other international telecoms companies.

All 200 would be eligible for a deferred bonus plan under which Concert will top up annual bonuses by a third provided they are taken in shares, not cash.

Additionally, Sir Peter would participate in a scheme entitling him to share options worth four times salary.

BT sources yesterday disputed WorldCom's claim that MCI would not have to pay a \$450m penalty if its shareholders rejected the merger with BT. "No matter which way they play it, they will have to pay \$450m plus expenses."

## Bid would allow Salomon to recoup some of \$100m loss

The role of Salomon Brothers in WorldCom's \$30bn bid for MCI was under intense scrutiny last night, as it emerged that the deal would enable the US investment banking giant to recoup some of the \$100m it lost when BT cut the price of its original merger offer.

Salomon was the leading adviser hacking WorldCom's bid, a service which is likely to earn the bank \$100m in fees.

In a close relationship going back to the 1980s, Salomon has also repeatedly tipped the fast-growing company as one of the

brightest businesses in the industry.

When Bernard Ebbes, now WorldCom president, embarked on its dramatic expansion into the US phone market, Salomon provided the guidance. The bank was also the adviser to MFS, the local telephones group, and was instrumental in bringing the company together with WorldCom in last year's \$14bn merger.

WorldCom's biggest gamble, the takeover bid for MCI, would also solve some of Salomon's problems.

The bank is believed to have built up a \$500m arbitrage gamble on MCI's share price, which plunged when BT renegotiated the deal in August. The bank was one of several arbitrageurs, including the billionaire speculator George Soros, which bet on the fact that MCI shares were trading well below the price implied in BT's cash and shares offer. When WorldCom's bid burst into the open on Wednesday, MCI's share price leapt by 20 per cent, taking much of the pressure off the speculators.

It was unclear yesterday whether Salomon had unwound its entire position before WorldCom's bid. Tom King, Salomon's managing director, who helped to arrange the offer, declined to comment. "We don't disclose this and we're not required to," he said last night.

One City trader said: "It's unlikely they would have totally unwound the whole position. If they'd stuck with MCI shares then Salomon's would probably have made back most of what they'd lost."

Salomon also came under scrutiny following the shock profits warning issued by MCI in July.

Jack Grubman, Salomon's New York based telecoms analyst, urged that the two companies keep the deal together, despite the turbulence.

He told investors in a note after the profits warning that there was "no deal risk whatsoever."

Mr Grubman and Mr Ebbes have also had a close working relationship for many years.

-Chris Godsmark

## Speculation grows over BZW takeover by continental bank

The consolidation of the investment banking sector looked set to claim another scalp last night as speculation intensified that a continental European bank was finalising a takeover of BZW. Tom Stevenson and Leo Paterson report on an apparent volte face by its parent, Barclays.

held back by the performance of their investment banking arm. But speculation has intensified in recent weeks and Barclays shares have soared on hopes that it might shed its comparatively volatile investment banking earnings to focus on its core retail operation.

A disposal of BZW would, however, represent a change of heart for Barclays which had resisted calls from its shareholders to pull out of investment banking and publicly backed the firm.

BZW was thrown into the spotlight in February, when an £85m drop in operating profit wiped more than £1bn from the value of Barclays' shares. Potential bidders back then were thought to include JP Morgan and Salomon Brothers.

In June, the increasingly feverish gossip saw prey turn predator, when Barclays was named as a possible bidder for rival NatWest. Barclays' shares soared and NatWest, struggling with its investment banking division NatWest Markets, asked the Takeover Panel to force Barclays to make its intentions known. The Takeover Panel refused.

Barclays/NatWest speculation died down in July after it was revealed that NatWest and insurance group Prudential had held merger talks.

Rumours surrounding the future of BZW abated in the summer as it started to succeed in its bid to distance itself from the problems at NatWest. BZW announced much improved first half results, despite revealing a £20m 'black hole' in its trading operations. Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, said at the time that BZW was 'recovering nicely'.

Last week, however, the pressure on Barclays was reignited by the unexpected announcement by Travelers Group, owners of retail stockbrokers Smith Barney, that it planned to take over US investment bank Salomon Brothers. Hot on the heels of a similar deal between retail stockbrokers Dean Witter and US investment bank Morgan Stanley, it suggested the consolidation of the sector was gaining an unstoppable momentum and speculation was whipped into a frenzy.

The Travelers/Salomon deal put pressure on European banks to follow suit or risk being squeezed out by the growing power of the so-called bulge bracket of big American firms like Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs. Europeans such as Deutsche Bank, ABN Amro and ING were named as potential bidders for American firms such as Lehman Brothers and Bankers Trust but also for relative minnows, in global terms, such as BZW.

A takeover of BZW would come just as the investment bank appeared to have regained its self-confidence. It recently completed a move from shabby offices in the City to brand new marble clad accommodation in the Canary Wharf development in London's Docklands.

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Countering the company's claim that his bid proposals would simply saddle the group with unwanted debt, he promised to sell the Our Price record shops to WH Smith's partner, Virgin, and to dispose of its American operations. That would reduce the £1bn of debt that SBC Warburg, Waterstone's adviser, has proposed raising to fund the deal.

Making those disposals was not critical to the success of the takeover arithmetic, Mr Waterstone said. But he admitted that, for his proposals to make sense, he would have to generate like for like sales growth from the core retail chain of 4 to 5 per cent a year, compared to the current flat performance.

"It is a complete tragedy to watch this foremost retail brand go backwards at a rate of knots," Mr Waterstone said, as he promised to transform WH Smith's drab, underperforming high street shops by focusing on "books, news and beautiful stationery".

He said videos and music would be ditched as WH Smith focused on its three main product lines. Ranges would widen, the quality of staff would be improved and buying would get better. "Smiths used to do it well. We would concentrate on its old values," he added. "You completely change the culture, you Waterstone it."

Transforming the chain would re-

quire beefing up the book section, enlarging the news offering to become the "authoritative newsagent again" and taking the stationery range upmarket. Smith, with more than 500 shops, has been losing market share to supermarkets, which sell many similar lines.

Mr Waterstone's proposals, which envisaged a 20p a share cash payment to WH Smith shareholders, together with a share in a heavily borrowed acquisition vehicle, were still being treated with scepticism in the City yesterday. Analysts and WH Smith's large shareholders said they were waiting for concrete proposals to be tabled.

Despite Mr Waterstone's claim yesterday that WH Smith chairman Jeremy Hardie had been interested in his proposals as late as Tuesday afternoon, it was not felt that the company had acted hastily in dismissing the plan without putting it to shareholders.

One leading shareholder, who wanted to remain anonymous, said: "There is often a lot of sound and not much light in these situations. If there is something credible we would like to explore it, but we have a slight feeling that this is the 1980s all over again."

He added that, while new chief executive Richard Handover had a lot to prove, he should retain shareholders' support.

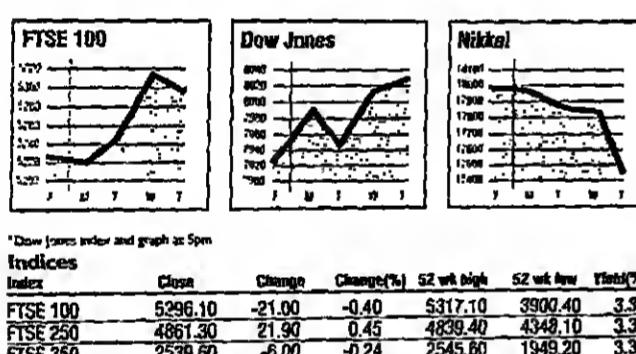
John Richards, an analyst at NatWest Markets, was equally sceptical: "We don't regard it as a serious offer and taking on that level of debt is potentially problematical for a company with strategic issues to resolve."

He questioned whether Mr Waterstone had the experience or ability to run a public company of WH Smith's size.

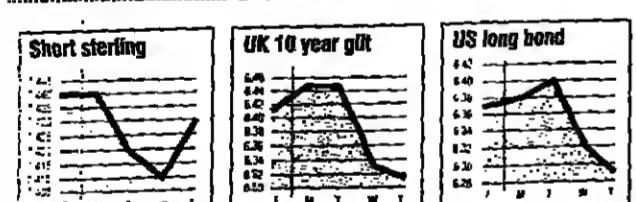
The Waterstone team also hit back at the assumptions made by WH Smith in its rejection on Wednesday. It denied putting a valuation of £35m on Mr Waterstone's latest retail venture, the Daisy and Tom children's store on London's King's Road.

That figure, it said, was inferred by WH Smith from its proposal and, if true, implied a valuation of £1.6bn for the group, a substantial premium to its current market value. It also questioned WH Smith's calculation of advisers' fees of £34m.

### STOCK MARKETS



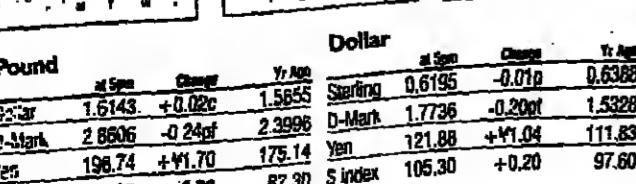
### INTEREST RATES



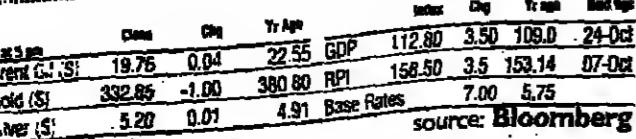
### MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Chg	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Chg
Ent Energy	354.50	21.60	6.46	BioCompanys	585.00	-42.50	-6.77
Entel Corp	1054.00	49.50	4.62	United Asper	491.50	-22.00	-4.34
Entel Corp	381.50	16.00	4.38	Rolls Royce	243.00	-10.50	-4.14
Entel Corp	459.50	17.50	3.95	Entel Corp	149.50	-3.50	-3.55

### CURRENCIES



### OTHER INDICATORS



Roy Gardner, chief executive of the British Gas trading arm Centrica, was last night sitting on shares worth more than £2.5m after the company issued a further tranche of options under its long-term incentive scheme.

A total of five executive directors, including Mr Gardner, were awarded another 1.18 million shares worth £1.1m. In total the five hold 6 million shares worth £5.7m at last night's closing price of 94.5p.

Mr Gardner has 2.7 million shares, of which 1.23 million are held

under the long-term incentive scheme. Mike Alexander, managing director, has just over one million, finance director Mark Clare holds 774,000, commercial director Peter Lehmann has 967,000 and Roger Wood, managing director of British Gas Services, holds 626,000 shares.

Under the Centrica scheme, directors are eligible for share awards equal to 125 per cent of their base salaries. The shares have to be held for a period of five to six years and can only be granted provided certain performance conditions are met

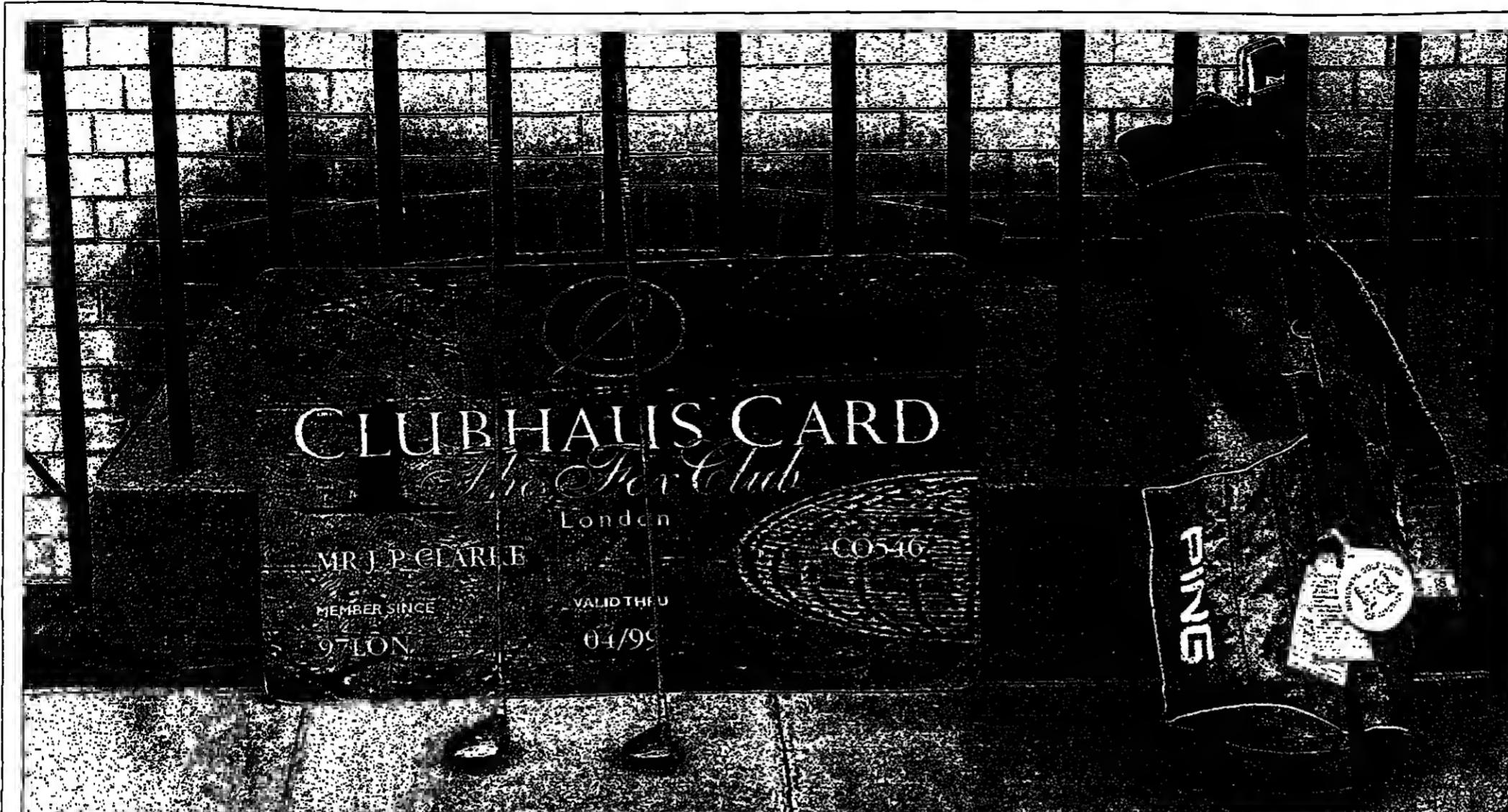
based on total shareholder return. The company's performance must rank 50th or above against the FTSE 100 for any shares to be released. If the performance is in the top quartile then 100 per cent of the shares are vested.

Centrica's shares have been on a rising trend since the demerger in February as it has begun to unwind its take-or-pay liabilities in the North Sea and fought back against a loss of market share to rivals through a series of price cutting initiatives.

-Michael Harrison

### SHARE PRICES

The Independent recently changed the basis under which stocks are selected for inclusion on the shares listing page. The first wave of readers' requests for the inclusion of certain other stocks is about to be accommodated. All further requests should be put in writing to the Business Editor, marked "share listings" (or e-mailed to: [IndyBusiness@Independent.co.uk](mailto:IndyBusiness@Independent.co.uk)) and will be accommodated if possible.



Clubhaus doubles first-half profits after buying spree

Clubhaus, the UK golf company, announced yesterday that first-half profits had doubled to £1.4m in the six months to June thanks to an acquisition spree which has seen it buy seven golf courses since the start of the year. Clubhaus is buying a third German course in Stuttgart, taking its total number of European clubs to 15. It plans to expand its chain to 20 clubs in the near future. Clubhaus also said that there are almost 6,500 holders of the Clubhaus Card (left), its new loyalty card that gives course discounts. Clubhaus' shares rose 1.5p to 81.5p, compared to its flotation price of 75p in February 1996. Clubhaus' shares got off to a rocky start when they floated but have done better recently. The recovery has been helped by the recruitment in late 1996 of David Lloyd, the former tennis star who set up a fitness club chain, as non-executive director. The addition of Mr Lloyd to the board was part of the company's aim to combine golf courses with other leisure activities. Five Clubhaus UK courses now have planning permission for health and fitness facilities.

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Sheffield United and QPR show heavy losses in post-flotation results

Two quoted First Division football clubs, Sheffield United and Queens Park Rangers, yesterday reported large losses roughly equivalent to their annual income in their first results since they joined the stock market. Both blamed heavy spending in the transfer market for adding to their trading difficulties. Clifford German investigates the high costs of competing to reach the Premier League and join football's top flight.

Sheffield United the First Division football side that reversed into Conrad, the Manchester-based sports consultancy last January reported a 33 per cent jump in attendances and trebled sales of merchandise through the club shop in the new soccer season, chief executive Charles Green said yesterday.

A plan to build a hotel and leisure park on a 14-acre site and expand the ground capacity at Bramall Lane has been approved. Licences have been granted to open bars in the stadium concourses and the shirt-sponsorship deal with Vaux breweries comes up for renewal at the end of the season.

The club is now third in the table with games in hand. But the company that owns the club made a pre-tax loss of £5.88m for the combined businesses in the year to the end of June compared with a loss of just £59,000 the previous year, due to spiralling wages costs. Alan Kelly, the goalkeeper, and the Norwegian international Roger Nilsen, two players currently out of favour with the new team manager may have to be sold soon to raise the best part of £3m.

Turnover reached £8.9m of which £2.35m came from the football club, but costs swallowed up all but £13,000. After adding in a £2.44m loss on the sale of Sportswinner clothing businesses, and a loss

of £2.96m in the transfer market the company fell sharply into the red. The football turnover could treble this year and the sports promotion business of Conrad will be retained. Mr Green confirmed, but the shares fell 4p to 53.5p, barely half the price they reached just after the merger in January.

It was a similar story at Loftus Road, the holding company that owns Queen's Park Rangers football club and Wasps, the Rugby Union league champions. Promotion for QPR, currently third in the table, will transform the financial prospects for the group and attendances are up 6 per cent so far this season, while the club is reviewing the options for enlarging the Loftus Road stadium or moving to a new site to the west of London. The chairman, Chris Wright, said yesterday.

Loftus Road also intends to invest in and develop its off-the-field activities in the area of merchandising and other commercial activities in order to broaden the commercial base and lessen the dependence on success on the field, the chairman said.

The company has appointed a new chief executive, Stephen Oakley, a former finance director of Hartstone to run the club, but it kicked off its first published accounts with a loss almost equal to the annual turnover. The club generated an income of £7.5m, playing staff and match day costs absorbed £7.47m and the stadium cost £920,000 to run. Together they added up to an operating loss of £3.61m and a net loss of £3.55m on player transfers resulted in a total loss of £7.16m. After crediting interest income of £112,000, the published loss reached £7.05m, equal to 20.1p a share.

Loftus Road shares eased 1p to 44p compared with the high point of 106.5p at the peak of the season of soccer mania in January. Other quoted clubs have also fallen over the year. Spurs were unchanged at 92.5p yesterday, 40 per cent below their high in February. Even Manchester United, near the top of the Premier League fell 2p on the news that their captain, Roy Keane, is out for the season to 669p, 8 per cent below the peak.

## UK's late-payers total 80%

More than 80 per cent of British companies pay their bills late, and the worst offenders are large organisations, according to research published by business information service Dun and Bradstreet to coincide with today's deadline for submissions on the Government's consultative paper proposing that penalties and statutory interest be introduced for those who do not settle bills on time. Accountants remain sceptical about the effectiveness of such a move, however, with the Institute of Chartered Accountants recommending its introduction in stages to allow assessment, while the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants argues that the measure will only work if part of a larger action plan designed to change the "late-payment culture".

## C&W launches price war

Cable & Wireless launched a new price war with BT yesterday when it said it is to cap the price of a UK national telephone call at 50 pence on Saturdays from October until the end of the year. Over one million consumer phone users will pay no more than 50 pence for a UK long-distance call every Saturday, allowing them to stay on phone all day at no extra cost, the company said. "We have introduced the 50 pence price cap so that customers can enjoy using the phone and not worry about how long the call is," said Adrian Chamberlain, managing director of C&W Communications. "Saturday seemed an ideal day to choose as people have more time to relax and make those catch-up phone calls," he added.

## Huntingdon gets clearance

Huntingdon, the drug testing group, said yesterday that the Home Office has granted a new Certificate of Designation for Huntingdon's research centres at Juntingdon and Eye. Since its interim statement on 31 July this year the company says it has "explained to the Home Office remedial actions taken and enhancements to managerial and supervisory controls and training programmes, in response to the 16 stringent pre-conditions to the award of a new certificate. Ministers have agreed that Huntingdon has met these pre-conditions. The new Certificate means that there will be no disruption to any current or planned studies and other research activities, the company said. Glaxo Wellcome said yesterday that it had not yet decided whether to renew business with Huntingdon.

## Burn Stewart figures updated

Burn Stewart, the independent whisky distillers, reported a 29 per cent rise in sales to £70m, a 56 per cent increase in operating profits to £6.1m and a leap in pre-tax profits from £1.01m to £3.56m in the year to the end of June. But the results are clouded by the disputed figures for the previous year. They included £5.1m worth of turnover and £1.4m worth of profit that has now been transferred to 1996-97 figures after the directors accepted a ruling by a review panel. Profits continue to be affected by the high costs of brand building in the face of depressed prices. But whisky prices in the retailers' own label sector where Burn Stewart operates have begun to rise, chairman Bill Thornton said. The shares fell 2.5p to 44p.

The group expects to spend £500,000 on improving its IT investment in the current year in an attempt to win more construction and maintenance contracts. It has also invested £200,000 in a 25 per cent stake in the proposed Rapid Transit System for Northampton. It hopes to install a network of low-pollution gas-driven buses running in specially built concrete channels and served by park-and-ride terminals on the town's outskirts.

## Boost for housing sector

House-builders are taking heart from the rising house prices and stepping up their activity. In the three months from June to August, 48,000 dwellings were started an increase of 8 per cent on the same three months a year ago, while in the month of August 14,900 dwellings were started, an increase of 22 per cent on August last year, and 13,000 were completed, 25 per cent more than a year ago.

House prices are now rising by anything from 6.9 per cent a year according to the Halifax up to 12.9 per cent a year according to Nationwide. New house prices are also beginning to rise. Galford the Lincolnshire based housebuilders and specialised construction company said yesterday it has raised prices by 5 per cent in three stages in the year to the end of June and another 1.5 per cent in July, and expects similar increases over the next year.

Profit doubled to £2.24m in the year to the end of June in spite of a £660,000 hit on the last of its discontinued businesses, house completions were up 15 per cent and housebuilding profits rose 38 per cent to £1.77m. It almost achieved its target of a 10 per cent profit on turnover in the housebuilding division, the chairman, Richard Miles, said yesterday.

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## IN BRIEF

### United States industry lifted by orders surge

US industry enjoyed a 1.3 per cent jump in orders in August, thanks in large part to the biggest monthly rise in orders for electronic components since February 1990. These surged by 76.9 per cent, while orders for electrical equipment climbed by a healthy 28.4 per cent. Figures for July were revised up to show a 0.5 per cent increase during the month. However, the recent run of figures showing the American economy to be growing more steadily than expected were countered by a small increase in new unemployment claims. These edged up by 1,000 to 308,750 in the latest week. The eyes of the financial markets remained firmly set on figures due today on employment gains and earnings last month.

### German output falls

Germany's industrial output fell in August, unable to keep up the pace after surging in July. That month's 3.9 per cent jump was almost offset by a 3.2 per cent drop in August. The weakest part of manufacturing was the production of consumer durables, reflecting the absence of consumer demand and the reliance of the German recovery on exports. Construction also fell sharply, in both west and east Germany. However, economists said the new figures were only slightly disappointing and the underlying trend remained healthy. Fears that the Bundesbank might still increase interest rates have not abated.

### International Energy boost

International Energy made a half-year pre-tax profit of £5.17m against £2.843m last time and announced a placing and one-for-four open offer to raise £12.38m. The company grew its earnings per share to 7.68p from 5.61p and its dividend to 1.20p from 1.16p. The company said it will spend the £12m on developing its UK natural gas business. Crédit Lyonnais Laing, as agent for the company, has conditionally agreed to place 50 per cent of the new ordinary shares with institutional and other investors subject to the rights of qualifying shareholders to apply for new ordinary shares under the open offer. The company said trading for the current year is in line with the board's expectations.

### Bowland gets regulator fine

Bowland Financial Management, an independent financial adviser based in Nelson, Lancashire, has been fined £10,000 by regulators for breaking rules on controlling its own business. The Personal Investment Authority said the company had failed to make sure its staff were suitable for the job and were properly trained and supervised. Records were badly kept and the company had neglected to take the right steps to make sure it did not break the rules. Bowland had also broken rules on the financial resources it needed and the reports it should make to the regulator. The failings were exposed in a routine monitoring visit by the authority. Bowland had at first decided it would appeal against being disciplined but later backed down.

### Unilever sells coffee interest

Unilever is to sell its coffee operations in Australia and New Zealand, together worth Aus\$90million, as a single unit to concentrate on its ice cream and tea operations, a spokesman said. The operations, which are profitable, were acquired as part of the Bushells acquisition made nearly 10 years ago, and they employ 231 people in Australia and 43 in New Zealand. The brands being sold include Robert Timms, Pablo and Faggs and will be sold as a going concern.

### Queensborough profits slip

Queensborough made pre-tax profits of £809,000 against £848,000 last time, and paid a dividend of 0.1p against nothing the year before. In August, the caravan park division and Hotel Burslton traded in line with expectations, however the day-visitor attractions recorded a reduction against last year, according to Queensborough chairman KR Leech. "Currently every effort is being made to maximise performance in the second half year," he said. Mr Leech said significant progress is being made in the formation of the new chain of branded restaurants division and the plans will be announced separately "as soon as we are in a position to do so".

## United Assurance raises mis-selling provision to £150m

United Assurance, the life assurance group formed last year from the merger of Refuge Assurance and United Friendly, yesterday more than doubled the amount it is setting aside to pay compensation to investors who were mis-sold personal pensions to £150m. Andrew Verity reports on the embarrassing admission.

United Assurance warned that it may not be able to meet strict deadlines set by the Treasury for compensation victims of the pension mis-selling scandal. Directors blamed delays on difficulties obtaining information from both occupational schemes and its own clients.

Group chief executive George Mack denied that the company had failed properly to estimate its own liability in the past.

He said the extra money was needed to meet liabilities in full in the wake of a tougher attitude

on mis-selling from the Treasury. Budget changes to tax credits have also increased the cost of compensation.

Mr Mack also claimed that the cost of redress had risen because United is to offer mis-selling victims guarantees of redress in future – a more expensive method than compensation upfront.

However, the doubt cast on United's ability to meet the Treasury deadlines could damage future earnings. Government ministers have hinted that companies which do not meet the deadlines could be excluded from selling stakeholder pensions.

Stakeholder pensions, expected to be introduced in the next two years, will target low income savers – a key market for United, a home service company whose sales people collect premiums door to door.

Home service companies are particularly exposed to the mis-selling scandal. Prudential, which was once the largest player in this market before it quit the business, revealed a £450m provision for mis-selling two months ago. It had previously set aside just £250m.

In contrast to a Prudential decision to make

policyholders pay 90 per cent of the compensation costs with shareholders paying only 10 per cent of the costs.

The announcement came as United struggled to appease shareholders, who have been frustrated by delays in getting DTI approval to restructure the group. It announced it had finally got approval for shareholders to reap most of the £57m cost savings flowing from last October's merger.

The directors also bowed to pressure from the market to ditch a loss-making direct-selling vehicle, United Friendly Financial Planning. This was sold to Friends Provident for a loss of £2m. One analyst said this was a misguided venture upmarket which should have been ditched long ago. "It has taken them a very long time to do what is obvious," he said.

Mr Mack said the company had struggled to find qualified staff. "It is easy to look with twenty-twenty hindsight, which is all right in itself. But coming up against practical difficulties is quite different."

Mr Mack admits morale is low among Unit-

ed's staff as more than a third must leave or be made redundant. Of 6,400 staff, 900 have left after turning down the option of relocating from London to Wimblsow, the company's new headquarters in Cheshire.

But the company is currently selecting more staff for compulsory redundancy to bring numbers down to 4,200. Of 279 branches, 160 are to be shut.

United's operating profits nearly doubled to £1.58m in the six months to June, excluding the provision for mis-selling. However, £57.8m of this came from the investment return on more than £800m of surplus assets. In the same period last year, United was blocked from attributing these surplus assets to shareholders.

The figure for operating profits also masks a 5 per cent drop in new premiums from January to June against the same six months last year. This contrasts sharply with close competitors such as Britannia Assurance, which has boosted sales after competitors such as Prudential withdrew from the market.

Investment column, page 27





THE INVESTMENT COLUMN  
EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

## Maid deal has compelling logic

Dan Wagner, chief executive of Maid, a heady prospect of running the world's largest online information provider. Mr Wagner has more than doubled his company's size by buying Knight-Ridder information for \$4.20m (£2.61m).

The deal is audacious, but investors should be reassured that key staff, like Jeff Galt, KRI's president, who is joining as Mr Wagner's number two, will provide some continuity and useful customer support skills. The price is also right. Maid could have paid £350m without causing a shareholder revolt.

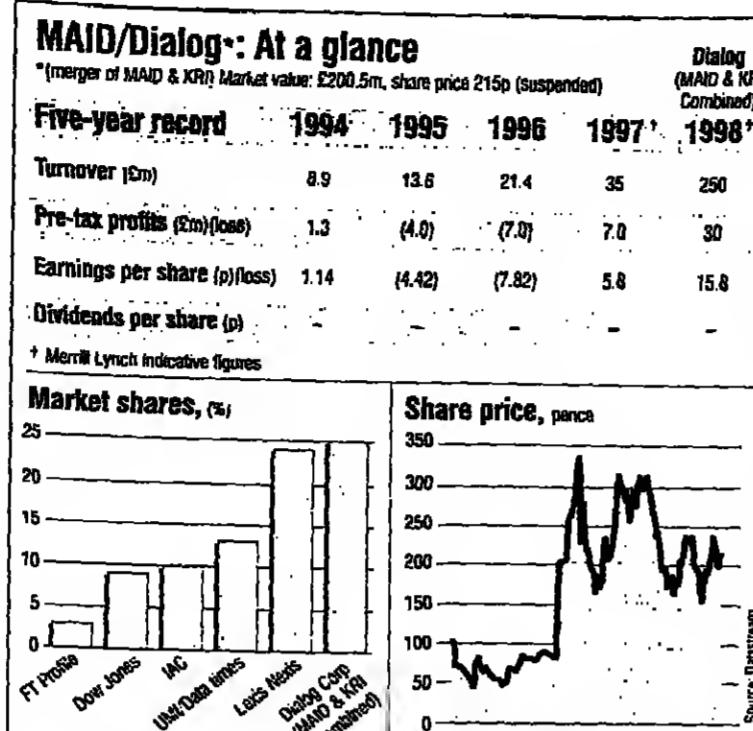
Most important, though, is the deal's compelling industrial logic. First bigger is better in the online information world, and the enlarged company, to be named The Dialog Corporation, will outstrip Reed International's prestigious Lexis-Nexis brand to take a quarter share of the world market. Size is everything in wrangling over content with media giants. Reuters recently withdrew the news service it provided to Maid, illustrating the risks of being a weedy player.

Second KRI provides Maid with much-needed quality content and branding. KRI has the largest general reference service in the US, and Europe's largest archival service. Mr Wagner, who prides himself on his tough negotiating tactics, has also sealed a five-year contract with Knight-Ridder Newspapers, KRI's parent, as part of the deal, giving Dialog access to 27 US daily newspapers.

First-class information will complement Maid's user-friendly search technology, InfoSort, enabling Dialog to target the growing "end-user" market, that is, ordinary individuals who want to access information online.

The deal, to be funded by a combined £118m placing, junk-bond issue, and debt, is expected to be earnings-enhancing in 1998. Maid is hopeful of making cost-savings of around \$35m a year in the first year. Many of KRI's 34 offices will be absorbed by Maid's, although the reorganisation will cost \$10m.

Merrill Lynch had Maid trading on a sky-high 37 times forward earnings, but the broker is tentatively pencilling a better value 14 times for the newly merged company. The shares, sus-



pended yesterday, start trading as Dialog next month. Merrill reckons they will debut at around 220p, but they look set to leap soon afterwards. Buy when you can.

## Costly sweetener from Care First

Care First's decision yesterday to shell out £7m buying back its own shares looks more about sweetening disheartened shareholders than sensible financial engineering. Not surprisingly Keith Bradshaw, chairman of the nursing home company, is desperate to please after his unwillingness to cede power drove out Chai Patel, his new and well-regarded chief executive.

The buy-back of 4 per cent of its shares at 102p did nudge Care First's value 1p higher to 99p, but that hardly compensates for 75 per cent under-performance in the stock over five years.

Though the tough nursing home sector is partly to blame, Mr Bradshaw and his fellow directors have made some appalling business decisions which have destroyed shareholder

value. Until just a year ago, the group's policy was to build single-storey nursing homes on huge sites. That massively pushed up land costs just when falling occupancy was depressing profits.

And Care First's insistence on building basic rooms without en-suite toilets encouraged snappy purchasers to shop elsewhere. So although turnover has more than quadrupled in five years, earnings per share and fees per bed have actually fallen, even after merging with the more profitable operators, Greenacre and Court Cavendish, Mr Patel's company bought last year.

All the buy-back does is raise gearing higher – to over 100 per cent on some estimates – and strain already thin interest cover. True, Care First's recent decision (better late than never) to stop building new homes will boost cash and profits short term. But for real growth, this company needs new management to take it into fresh, higher margin areas like home care and psychiatry. Just, in fact, what Mr Patel was starting to do.

Until it resolves these problems, Care First's shares look dead in the water, particularly given the likelihood that the group's assets are overvalued. Though its assets are on the books at 140p a share, falling fees per

bed and some £30m needed to spruce up its homes make 65p-70p a share a more realistic level. On 13 times this year's earnings, avoid.

## United Assurance has more to do

Until yesterday, shareholder confidence in the management of United Assurance, the life company, looked distinctly shaky. It has taken a long time to deliver on a promise that shareholders, not policyholders, would benefit most from £37m of cost savings following United's merger with Refuge Assurance last October. Unwisely, United has also been trying to take itself outside its core business of door-to-door premium collection into more upmarket direct selling. The vehicle set up for this, United Financial Planning has been consistently loss-making.

United may now have partly appeased its critics. The group yesterday said that the Department of Trade had agreed to proposals to shift back office staff into shareholder-owned company, allowing shareholders to benefit from cost-cutting. The group has also bowed to market pressure and yesterday said it was selling its financial planning arm to Friends Provident and refocusing on its core business.

However the market was justified in marking United's shares down 22p to 491.5p. While most new business in the life sector has grown by at least 10 per cent this year, United's new business in the six months to June fell sharply – by 5 per cent. Group chief executive George Mack puts this down to an absence of the feel-good factor among United's low-income customers.

This explanation does not wash. Other companies in the home service market, like Britam, have seen new premiums rise sharply, filling a gap left by the Prudential, which has abandoned home service.

With United's price at only a small premium to its embedded value of 455p per share, even a modest growth in anticipated sales would make the shares look cheap. But Mr Mack predicts poor sales for the next half as the group closes 160 of its 279 branches. Not for the impatient.

## PEOPLE &amp; BUSINESS

## JOHN WILLCOCK



Other moves recently include pharmaceuticals analyst Ian White, a former Kleinwort Benson bod, who has left Robert Fleming together with his deputy Sarb Klar to join TT International. TT is a London-based fund management company founded by Tim Tacchi, an investment guru in health care who used to work for Fidelity.

And then there's drugs analyst Tom Geimer, who left Henry Cooke Lumsden three months ago to join the corporate finance side of Apx Securities in Manchester.

Mr Geimer, a native of the US who settled over here "many years ago," can still get his head around "soccer," as he calls it. Which is a pity, since Apx has been heavily involved in financing football clubs like including Leicester, Millwall and Sheffield United. The game "makes no sense to me," he murmurs.

While the fevered negotiations over the proposed merger between global accountancy firms Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse go on in smoke-filled rooms across the planet, one particular sticking point has turned up in the UK. The insolvent people at Price Waterhouse are still in the process of suing Coopers & Lybrand over the latter's role as Robert Maxwell's auditors.

PW were appointed administrators to Maxwell Communication Corporation (MCC) in December 1991. Since then insolvent partners including Mark Homan and Jonathan Phillips have worked mightily to sort out the Anglo-American group in the interests of creditors, and in the process have launched legal action against the auditors of MCC, Coopers.

Whilst not in the Courtaulds league, the Wykeham is a larger business than you might think, with turnover of £1.4m including 70,000 meals, 30,000 bottles of wine and a mighty 200,000 pints of beer.

The bigwigs of the CBI are being booted out of their Centre Point office in central London next Monday. The landmark Sixties tower block is undergoing a complete refurbishment, which means director general Adair Turner and his cohorts will have to make do with just two floors instead of their usual seven. Council meetings and the like will have to be held elsewhere at a venue yet to be decided. The Barbican in the City is in pole position, J hear.

The tarts up will be finished in April next year. Till then it represents just one more upheaval to be handled by the CBI's president, Colin Marshall. Our Colin is also, lest we forget, deputy chairman of BT, a company much in the news at the moment, as well as chairman of Inchcape and British Airways.

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## JUDO

# Alexander grapples with faded glory

Until recently Britain was one of judo's leading nations, winning many of the sport's top prizes. Now, however, international success is rare.

On the eve of a World Championships that bodes ill for the national squad, Philip Nickson meets the woman charged with revitalising judo in this country.

When the British judo squad enter the fray at next week's World Championships in Paris, they know what they will have their work cut out to match even the solitary medal they won at the last event in Japan two years ago. For most, it will be a bruising experience.

But there is little doubt that the new chairman of the British Judo Association, Lesley-Anne Alexander, has an even greater fight on her hands. And the prize is not just a medal but the reputation – even the survival – of the sport itself.

For British judo has never been at such a low ebb. In less than a decade – two Olympiads – the sport which produced the World Championship glories of Neil Adams, Karen Briggs, Sharon Rendle, Diane Bell and Nicola Fairbrother is bumping along the bottom track in world terms.

There is chaos in the coaching structure – a year after the Olympics there still is not a national team manager, and players young and established are increasingly resorting to training abroad.

Membership of the British Judo Association is down to an all-time low. In the mid-1980s, it was 40,000. Now, the official figures put it at 22,000, though that includes some recent cosmetic work to take away some 5,000 new young members attracted by lowering the age group from eight to six, and the real fall is to under 17,000.

Morale is low. The team returned from Atlanta without a single medal and there was a different kind of scandal after the Barcelona Olympics, with a shameful exercise in sports politics.

Now, what is left of British judo has turned to the housing director of the London borough of Enfield to sort things out. It is, in a way, an unlikely choice, not least because she is the first female chairman of any national organisation in the International Judo Federation.

Lesley-Anne Alexander is 37. She became a black belt at 16 and, for a short time, was on the British national team. But her demonstrative success has been at club level: the Willesden Judo Club, which she founded with her brother Leigh, has established itself as one of the strongest junior clubs in the country. This, to her, is one of the encouraging signs for the sport. "People underestimate the value of judo at grass roots level," Alexander says.

She is as proud of the thriving parents' beginners class as the fact that Sam Dunkley, the 60-kilo fighter who started as a child at Willesden, will be on the British team next week.

However, Alexander will scarcely have time to watch him, for the task facing her is daunting. Every area needs se-



Lesley-Anne Alexander, the black belt now in control of the beleaguered British Judo Association

Photograph: Robert Hallam

rious attention, starting with the national squads. "They have been unprofessionally managed," admits Alexander, who is accustomed to clear management structures: she is currently overseeing an £80m housing development in her borough.

The recent appointment of a Belgian, Jean-Marie Dedecker, to run the national squad has fallen flat on its face with his withdrawal weeks before he was due to take up the post.

And with just two years to go before Britain's greatest judo showcase – the World

Championships in Birmingham in 1999 – time is short to develop a squad truly capable of taking medals. Colin McIver, 1984 team manager, is currently tipped to step once more into the breach, but whether he can salvage anything remains to be seen.

This parlous state within the top competitive structure is the first thing that requires Alexander's attention. In addition to her plans for a new team manager and a group of specialised coaches, she also wants to set up a players' council, so that the voice of the

competitor is heard, not just through complaints in the press; and to recognise the work of personal coaches.

Yet international medal success is only one aspect of her forthcoming work. Financial stability and increased membership are equally important. "Four to five years ago, we had nearly 1,000 clubs. Now we have 870, but I believe that the fall in membership has bottomed out."

Whereas the previous BJA chairman, George Kerr, spent considerable time on Britain's international standing – which

resulted in the successful World Championship bid – Alexander will concentrate more on judo Britain.

There is, however, some scepticism within British judo of her rise to the chairmanship. At the AGM last week, it was pointed out that she has been a director of the BJA during much of the time that it has sunk to its lowest level. But she won the clearest mandate, winning more votes than her two opponents put together.

And she is not afraid to grasp the nettle. "The success of the 1999 World Champi-

nships, and our performance in the Olympics in 2000 will be the test of my chairmanship," she says unequivocally.

Her sights will be set there.

But she would not mind a bronze or two next week to set her off, preferably from the 60-kilo men's category, so that she can hang it in the club at Willesden. It would give the encouragement she needs to set judo back on the road again to its former position as one of Britain's most bemedalled sports.

If she fails, it is in danger of becoming as peripheral as British wrestling.

## Australia sign coach linked to drug abuse

Eckart Arbeit, the former East German coach, has been appointed as Australia's coaching director for a four-year term that covers the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Arbeit, 56, was the head coach for throwing events for the East German athletics team from 1982 to 1988 and the chief track and field coach in 1989 and 1990.

Athletics Australia's executive director, Martin Sonst, said, in light of documented evidence of systematic doping in the former East Germany, Arbeit's record had been thoroughly investigated. "He is not known as a person who was involved in drug-taking in athletics," Sonst insisted.

However, Dr Werner Franke, the German parliamentary investigator into East German secret police files detailing drug abuse in sport, said Arbeit was "a major person responsible for the use of anabolic steroids."

"At the time he was coach there were plans of who should take how much drugs and how this should be co-ordinated. All that was his responsibility," Franke said this week.

Arbeit yesterday admitted knowledge of drug use in East Germany during his eight years in senior posts, saying it went on "all over the world, and I was working also with athletes in the United States at the same time – everybody was taking drugs. Everybody took the same or more drugs than East Germany."

He said he would consider refusing the four-year contract if Australian reporters continued to press him on the drug issue. "What was in the past I don't know, what will be in the future is that we have a position, the Australian federation and me, that we will get results without drugs," he said.

Berlin prosecutors are considering charges against East German coaches accused of supplying performance-enhancing drugs in unsuspecting athletes, many of whom now suffer from liver and kidney problems or other illnesses as adults. The focus is currently on swimming, but it will soon switch to athletics.

Franke thinks Arbeit will probably be mentioned in court proceedings because he was in such a high ranking position in the old regime. Arbeit said he did not know if he would be named in the hearings.

Franke said Arbeit was in charge of Jürgen Schult, Ulf Timmermann and Martina Hellmann – three throwers who won gold medals at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and whose drug dosages were later published in Germany.

Australia has been a strong critic of drug use in sport, particularly in swimming, but also recently in athletics.

## GOLF: GERMAN MASTERS

### Referee upsets dawdling Ballesteros

Four days following the euphoria of captaining the winning Ryder Cup team, Seve Ballesteros launched a scalding attack on the referee. Tiny Gray, after being warned for slow play at the German Masters in Berlin yesterday.

Ballesteros, who evidently believes there is a vendetta against him, was warned after taking 55 seconds over a five-foot putt on the 16th green. "I was very happy until the referee arrived," he snapped later.

"Ken Schofield [the Tour executive director] must review some of the people who are here as referee. Tiny Gray, maybe he is not qualified to be a referee. Perhaps he should do something else."

As Gray is probably the

most experienced referee on the PGA European Tour it was an unwise statement, but Ballesteros added: "I have this five-foot putt and first a cameraman upsets me, then someone moves so I back off."

"Then the referee comes up to me on the next tee and warns me. Always something happens to cause me to lose my momentum. The referee said I took extra time. It's plain stupid. I'm fed up. Maybe I have to play somewhere else."

Ballesteros is convinced he is not a slow player but Bernhard Langer, who shared the first-day lead with David Howell and Martin Gates with a four under par 68, was highly critical of his Ryder Cup captain. Langer, considered one of

the slower players on the Tour, was playing behind Ballesteros.

He said: "They were very slow. We had to wait on almost

every shot from the second hole onwards. Only in the last three holes did we not have to wait

and perhaps that was because they had been warned."

Under rules introduced two weeks ago players no longer have to be told they are being timed for slow play and the tournament director, David Probyn, defended Gray.

"We had the clock on Seve's group from the 14th hole," he said. "They were 30 minutes over schedule and one-and-a-half holes behind the group ahead of them. They were offending against the pace of play."

– John Oakley

## HOCKEY

### Brown's return inspires the champions

Slough, the defending National League champions, are already setting a cracking pace at the top of the Premier Division in spite of starting the season with a number of injury problems.

The good news for Slough is that Karen Brown's return to the midfield for the second half against Sutton last Saturday spurred them to five second half goals in their 7-2 victory.

There is also good news for the England coach, Maggie Swayne, in the return to fitness of Lucy Cope, who missed all of last season. The 22-year-old Great Britain and England defender is currently playing a very prominent role in Slough's midfield.

The greatest danger to

Slough's record will come from the former international Tammy Miller, whose scheming and probing is capable of un-

settling the best of defences, along with the speedy Lucy Culiford. Ipswich, the only other Premier side with a 100 per cent record, entertain Highams.

In Division One, Canterbury are the only team on maximum points, with good wins over Loughborough Students and former Premier side Bracknell. They will be strong favourites to beat Wimbledon tomorrow.

Canterbury's 6-1 thrashing of the students prompted the latter's coach and lecturer, the former Great Britain captain Mary Nevill, to line-up at sweeper for last week's game to provide stability. It worked – with a 4-2 victory away to Sunderland Bedlam.

– Bill Colwill

## ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 1/11/97. The winning numbers: 8, 12, 27, 35, 38, 49. Bonus number: 25. Total Sales: £29,091,272. Prize Fund: £13,755,194 (45% of ticket sales plus £654,580 Superdraw funding).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	3	£1,666,867	£5,000,001
Match 5 plus bonus ball	19	£70,218	£1,334,104
Match 5	403	£2,089	£833,807
Match 4	23,700	£77	£1,824,800
Match 3	475,284	£10	£4,752,840
TOTALS	499,409		£13,745,652

Breakage (prizes restricted to nearest £1): £3,542.

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FOOTBALL: CHAMPIONS' LEAGUE

## Ferguson frets over perennial problem

Alex Ferguson yesterday received the plaudits of his peers for his team's brilliant display against Juventus, but at yesterday's first official gathering of football coaches Glenn Moore found the Manchester United manager with much on his mind.

Win or lose he would have been there but there was a special pleasure for Alex Ferguson in taking the accolade of his peers at the Football Association's first official gathering of coaches yesterday.

One by one they paid tribute to Manchester United's thrilling 3-2 win over Juventus on Wednesday night - Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, Jimmy Armfield, the FA's special advisor, Gerhard Houllier, France's technical director and Howard Wilkinson, his English counterpart. Even the representative from Fifa, football's world governing body, had a word of praise.

But there were also two shadows on the horizon. The more immediate concerned Roy Keane's cruciate ligament injury which will keep him out of the game until next season at the earliest. The other was the perennial problem of fixture congestion.

Ferguson said there will be no immediate rush to replace Keane, since they cannot play a new signing in Europe until after Christmas, and the completion of the Champions' League stage, there is no point. The remaining players - who beat Juventus without Keane - look capable of maintaining United's domestic campaign well enough for the time being.

Much, though, will rest on the continued fitness of Nicky Butt and Ronny Johnsen. After a difficult start the Norwegian did well to largely contain the threat of Zinedine Zidane. "I was very pleased with the tactical discipline the midfield showed," Ferguson said. "That is something we learned from last season. You can talk about Dortmund's goal being deflected but it was a bad goal to give away because our midfield was strong out. You must have cover in central midfield all the time and I was pleased we always had two in there even when we were attacking."

Now, however, Ferguson said he had to bring the team down then build them up to play against Crystal Palace tomorrow. And so it will continue, Saturday-Wednesday-Saturday throughout the season.

"At present," Ferguson said, "we

are scheduled to play Aston Villa on the Monday of the European semi-final week (April 13, Easter Monday). If either of us get there we obviously won't play the game but it will be hard to rearrange it. So we are trying to bring the game forward but we simply cannot find a date.

"We could play as we did last night, and Newcastle against Barcelona, but you can't do it all the time and it is one thing to play with that intensity in October but another entirely to do it in April."

The problem was put into sharp relief when Houllier explained how, in France, clubs never play more than two games between European legs. Thus, while Aston Villa faced Liverpool last midweek, then Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday, their Uefa Cup opponents had one match which they were able to bring forward to last Friday. In the event Villa won but it was mighty close; Arsenal and Leicester did not.

"It is for the good of everyone," Houllier said. "The more clubs progress, the higher the Uefa ranking, the more clubs can enter the Uefa Cup and the more interest there is in going for those places." Since the French brought in the change, their success in Europe has gone from winning 27 per cent of fixtures to 50 per cent.

The problem is clubs who see little further than self-interest. More Premiership clubs fear relegation than entertain serious hopes of European glory and, understandably, they will thus not countenance a reduction in numbers.

"I don't think any English club can again dominate the European Cup the way Liverpool did, there is too much competition from the Italians, the French, and others. But English clubs can win it. England has some of the best young players in Europe. Several of them play for United and England and, with an eye on England's World Cup tie in Rome on 11 October, Hoddle said: "I'd like to congratulate Alex on a magnificent performance and result. The first part of the England-Italy battle is over with. This has set us up nicely for next week."

Ferguson responded: "There is nothing to be afraid of. Glenn has built a good unit with good young players. England will need good defending. It will be a tough night physically, tactically and ability-wise. Italian football is very aggressive, defenders defend as if they mean it but there has to be a belief in what England will try and achieve in Rome. I think they will do. I am one of the few who always have."

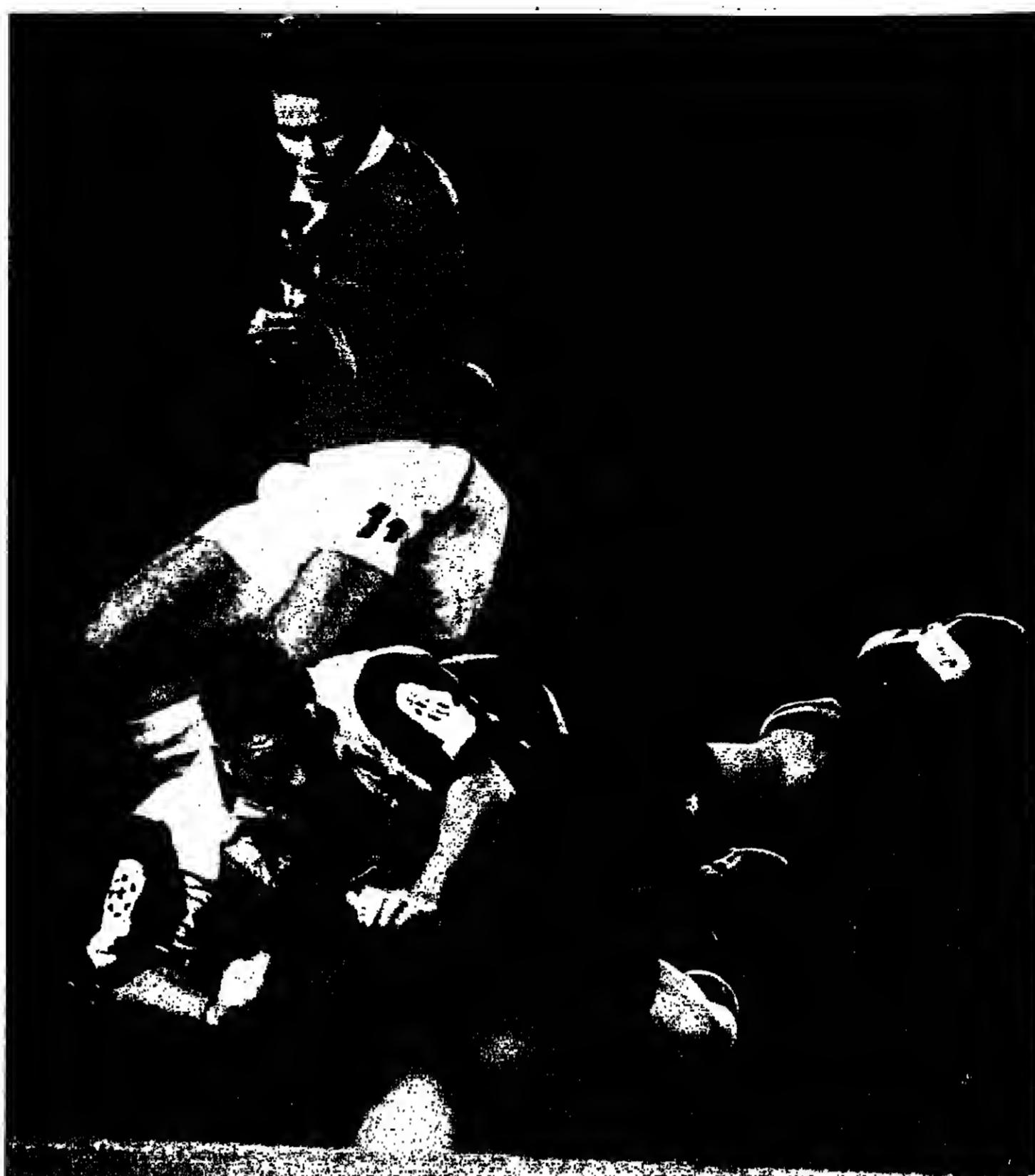
### Dortmund return to form

The European champions, Borussia Dortmund, shook off a looming crisis with perfect timing by outclassing Sparta Prague 4-1 on Wednesday in a match reminiscent of last season's feats.

With two goals from the Swiss striker Stephan Chappuis and one apiece from Heiko Herrlich and Jorg Heinrich, the German side showed the kind of class which helped them upset mighty Juventus 3-1 in last

May's final. However, back home, Dortmund have slumped to a poor 12th place in the 18-team Bundesliga after a 3-2 home defeat by 1860 Munich last weekend.

"I just can't explain what happened," said Borussia's new Italian coach, Nevio Scala, who was reported to be at risk of losing his job. "We had played badly in our last four matches and, all of a sudden, we played brilliantly."



Ryan Giggs, scorer of Manchester United's third goal, rises above the Juventus defender Alessandro Birindelli (top); Newcastle United's Faustino Asprilla takes on the Dynamo Kiev defence before suffering a groin injury

Photographs: Reuter

Champions' League						
Group A						
Borussia Dortmund	2	2	0	0	5	1 8
Parma	2	1	1	0	2	0 4
Sparta Prague	2	1	0	0	3	0 0
Dynamite	2	0	2	0	3	0 0
Group B						
Manchester Utd	2	2	0	0	5	2 8
Juventus	2	1	1	1	5	2 3
Feeneywood	2	1	1	1	5	2 3
Koels	2	0	2	0	5	2 0
Group C						
Dynamo Kiev	2	1	0	1	5	3 2
Newcastle Utd	2	1	1	1	4	3 4
Barcelona	2	1	1	1	4	3 2
PSV Eindhoven	2	0	2	0	5	1 1
Group D						
Real Madrid	2	2	0	0	5	1 8
Rosenborg	2	1	1	0	5	3 3
Olympique	2	1	1	0	5	3 3
Parma	2	0	2	0	5	0 0
Group E						
Bayern Munich	2	2	0	0	5	1 8
Paris St-Germain	2	1	1	1	4	3 3
Monaco	2	1	1	1	4	3 3
Leverkusen	2	0	2	0	5	0 0
Group F						
Sparta Prague	2	1	0	1	4	4
Monaco	2	1	1	1	4	3 3
Leverkusen	2	0	2	0	5	0 0
Remaining fixtures in English clubs' groups						
Group B: 22 Oct: Manchester Utd v Feyenoord; 19 Nov: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 26 Nov: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 2 Dec: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 9 Dec: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 16 Dec: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 23 Dec: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 30 Dec: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 6 Jan: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 13 Jan: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 20 Jan: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 27 Jan: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 3 Feb: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 10 Feb: Juventus v Feyenoord; 17 Feb: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 24 Feb: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 31 Mar: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 7 Apr: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 14 Apr: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 21 Apr: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 28 Apr: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 5 May: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 12 May: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 19 May: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 26 May: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 2 Dec: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 9 Dec: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 16 Dec: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 23 Dec: Juventus v Manchester Utd; 30 Dec: Juventus v 1860 Munich; 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## Lang living for the moment as Sharks prepare to strike

A dizzy schedule sees the Cronulla coach, John Lang, land in Britain for a match against the London Broncos just after the Australian Super League side he also guides lost to arch rivals New Zealand.

That result will not help the preparations of Lang, a man under pressure.

It is small wonder than John Lang is looking just a little frayed around the edges. Even he admits that six days towards the end of last month were not the best of his rugby career.

Within the space of a week, Lang's Cronulla Sharks lost the Super League Grand Final, not unexpectedly and not without honour, and his Australian Test team was beaten, much more traumatically, by New Zealand.

No sooner had that sunk in, than he was changing hats once more, bringing his club side to Britain for the World Club Championship quarter-final against the London Broncos, a match that carries with the threat of an unwanted hat-trick.

Lang copes with this schizoid life by keeping it in strict compartments. "I never think about one match until the previous one is over," he says. "I can't say I was very impressed with the idea of bringing Cronulla straight over to England when I woke up at 5.30 this morning after the Test in Australia. But now that's all over and you just start again."

A marvellous year has started to turn sour for Lang. Cronulla's form in 1996 won him the right to coach the Australian Super League representative side and the Sharks performed even better this season – at least until an hour into the Grand Final.

"It was a hit like watching London in their game against the Brisbane Broncos. We held them up to a certain point and then just fell away. But we made it to the Grand Final and we have to regard that as a good season."

Putting an Australian international team on to the field six days after that match was always asking for trouble. More than half the Test squad had played in the Grand Final and seemed flat and uninspired at the home for personal reasons.

He moves Mitch Healey to scrum-half, a position in which he is equally comfortable, with Adam Dykes coming in at stand-off, but the lack of Nikau's wide-ranging attacking skills will be felt.

"It certainly didn't help the preparation," Lang says. "But the result really wasn't all that surprising when you look at recent history. Great Britain have been capable of beating us in Test matches for the last few series. Australian domination has been tenuous for quite some time."

So rapid was the turnaround to get Cronulla on the plane to London that Lang had no opportunity to gauge the reaction in Australia to that defeat, which might he just as well.

Lang will bring Australia to

BY DAVE HADFIELD

Britain for their three-Test series in November but, for now, it is the chub hat that is firmly back on his head. His reputation as the safe pair of hands among Super League coaches has taken a battering and this his chance to restore it.

Lang was an Australian Test hooker, but he has come up through the coaching ranks the long way, via the club competition in his native Brisbane before taking on the perennially under-achieving Cronulla-Sutherland.

Under his guidance, they have become more respected than at any time in the Sydney club's history. If they go home beaten next week, however, the season will be remembered for its unfulfilled promise.

"That's the good thing about football," he says. "If you have one disappointment, there's soon another match to concentrate on and all you can do is to prepare the best you can."

Lang's preparations for Sunday have been disrupted by

the absence of two key players, the Test scrum-half, Paul Green, who cracked his sternum against New Zealand, and Tawera Nikau, who has stayed at home for personal reasons.

He moves Mitch Healey to scrum-half, a position in which he is equally comfortable, with Adam Dykes coming in at stand-off, but the lack of Nikau's wide-ranging attacking skills will be felt.

"On the other hand, we were without Nathan Long the last time we played in England and, now that he is back, he will make a mark. Missing players create opportunities for others."

Lang also has Andrew Ettingshausen fit again after missing the Kiwi Test, which gives the Sharks a reassuringly familiar look in the three-quarter line.

London, by contrast, have lost Shaun Edwards, initially to injury and now by his transfer to Bradford.

"That is bound to take something out of their attack, but I remember that Bobbie Goulding was missing when we played St Helens and the young bloke who replaced him [Sean Long] was just about their best on the night, so I won't be making any assumptions."

Nor, although it is only three weeks until he swaps roles yet again and comes back to Britain with an Australian squad in tow, will he be making many plans for that trip.

"I might look for a few training facilities, but that's about all," he says, insisting that the experience of his one-time understudy at Cronulla, Stuart Raper, shows the dangers of thinking too far ahead.

Raper's Castleford met a Bradford team in the Premier division that was already arguing the toss over whether they would have Robbie Paul available for the final. While they were worrying about that, Casts knocked them out and rendered the argument academic.

So that is the philosophy of Lang's split rugby existence: don't look forward, don't look back.

"I'm a slow learner," he says, with a distinct air of if-this-is-Wednesday-it-must-be-London. "But I've learnt that much."



Keiron Cunningham, of St Helens, is tackled by Stephen Kearney, of Auckland, during their World Club Championship match at Knowsley Road earlier this season. Photograph: Allsport

### WORLD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER-FINALS

#### Auckland v Bradford

(Kick-off 9am today, Ericsson Stadium)

No team has more to prove in the quarter-finals than Bradford, thrashed on their last visit to Auckland and also beaten in their last three domestic games. It is not the form of champions and the signing this week of Shaun Edwards has also cost them the services of the disillusioned Glen Tomlinson. On the positive side, the Bulls will have learnt a lot from their failures in this competition and they might also be meeting the Warriors at a good time. They have not played as a team for six weeks, but a number of them will have been celebrating after last weekend's Test win over Australia.

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#### Brisbane v St Helens

(10.30am tomorrow, ANZ Stadium)

Saints have the toughest task in world rugby league and it will be a major shock if they extend the Australian champions. It is not the form of champions and the signing this week of Shaun Edwards has also cost them the services of the disillusioned Glen Tomlinson. On the positive side, the Bulls will have learnt a lot from their failures in this competition and they might also be meeting the Warriors at a good time. They have not played as a team for six weeks, but a number of them will have been celebrating after last weekend's Test win over Australia.

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## Sink or swim for the condemned Hunter Mariners

The Hunter Mariners bring a whole new dimension to the concept of sudden-death rugby at Wigan tonight. Regardless of what happens in the World Club Championship, the Mariners are doomed after one season by circumstances beyond their control. When they return home, they will be pronounced extinct – sacrificed, like the Perth Reds this week, to the need for a unified, 20-team

competition for next season. An already hopeless position was underlined by their neighbours, the Newcastle Knights, winning the Australian Rugby League's Grand Final last weekend. There is only room for one club in the city under any compromise between the ARL and Super League, so Hunter are preparing for a match knowing that, if they lose, it will be their last.

Despite the death sentence hanging over them, the Wigan coach, Eric Hughes, regards the Mariners as especially dangerous.

"It makes it pretty difficult, but we are just trying to concentrate on the football," said their coach, Graham Murray, at Wigan yesterday. "If we weren't such a close-knit bunch of blokes it could have become a bit frayed. As it is, we make a lot of jokes about the situation."

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One thing about the organisation is that they do look

after you," Murray said. "We would prefer to stick together as a team, but it looks as though that won't be possible."

A compromise in Australia – much more on the ARL's terms than once seemed possible – has also moved nearer with a court ruling which has largely upheld the ARL's loyalty contracts with players.

In Europe, too, a realignment of clubs is on the agenda. Clubs

will be formed to represent the best of each of the four major European leagues.

Tim Henman took advantage of poor serving from his opponent Karol Kucera to move into the quarter-finals of the ATP tournament in Basle, Switzerland, yesterday.

Henman won, 6-4, 6-1, in 66 minutes against the Slovak, who had knocked out the third seed, Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia, in the first round.

The British No 2 will now meet either Magnus Norman or the fifth seed, Jonas Bjorkman, Greg Rusedski's victim in the US Open semi-finals.

Henman won the first set in 39 minutes and then broke for a 2-1 lead in the second set on his fourth break point.

Kucera had a break point in the next game but a Henman service winner cleared the danger and he went 3-1 ahead.

Kucera's serving problems returned as Henman broke him again, to love, to lead 4-1. A double fault on the first of two match points at 15-40 gave the 23-year-old the match.

– Dave Hodfield

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## Henman cancels out Kucera

In his 7-6, 6-3 first-round win over Germany's Marc-Kevin Goeller, Henman unleashed a serve recorded at more than 150mph. Although called for a let, the serve set the Briton thinking that he could improve on Kucera's mark of 143mph.

Henman said: "I have never hit a serve anything like that fast before and I appreciate these radar speed guns are not always as reliable as they might be."

The timing of Henman's serve – 151mph – surprised everyone, not least the European commentators, David Mercer and Frew McMillan, who wondered if the speed gun had been recalibrated.

Later, when they spoke with David Felgate, Henman's coach, Mercer and McMillan said they could not believe the serve had registered that much faster than Rusedski's record.

"David said he couldn't believe it, either," Mercer said, "but if it hadn't been a let it would have counted."

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## FOOTBALL

### Keane's knee injury robs United of key man in the middle

The champions of England will have to do without the man who makes their midfield tick for the rest of the season. Roy Keane's cruciate ligament injury is bad news for both Manchester United and the Republic of Ireland, as Rupert Metcalf reports.

They may be celebrating Wednesday's famous Champions' League victory over Juventus, but there was plenty of gloom at Old Trafford yesterday. Roy Keane, their inspirational captain, will have a cruciate ligament operation within the next month which will rule him out until at least the start of next season.

Keane was injured during last Saturday's game at Leeds - he hurt himself trying to tackle Alf-Inge Haland. A spokesman for the Old Trafford club said: "He had an exploratory operation on Monday, when a small piece of cartilage was removed, and it was discovered that he would also require a cruciate knee ligament operation.

"That will be performed in approximately four weeks,

when the swelling has gone down. He will be out for the rest of the season." Keane will also miss the Republic of Ireland's crucial World Cup qualifier against Romania tomorrow week - and almost certainly the finals if the Irish qualify for France via the play-offs.

"I'm not even thinking about Roy now for the play-offs or the World Cup finals proper," Mick McCarthy, the Republic's manager, said. "We've still got to get to France and without Roy it will make it doubly harder for us in the play-offs - whoever we are drawn against." McCarthy has already lost the striker Niall Quinn with a similar injury.

In the same situation as Keane is his former Old Trafford team-mate, Lee Sharpe. Leeds United's record signing will not play again this season after damaging anterior cruciate ligaments in his knee in a pre-season friendly on 2 August.

The 26-year-old former England international, who joined Leeds from Manchester United for £4m last summer, will undergo surgery on the knee next Wednesday. It had been initially hoped that the injury would clear up, but a specialist yesterday ruled that surgery was required.

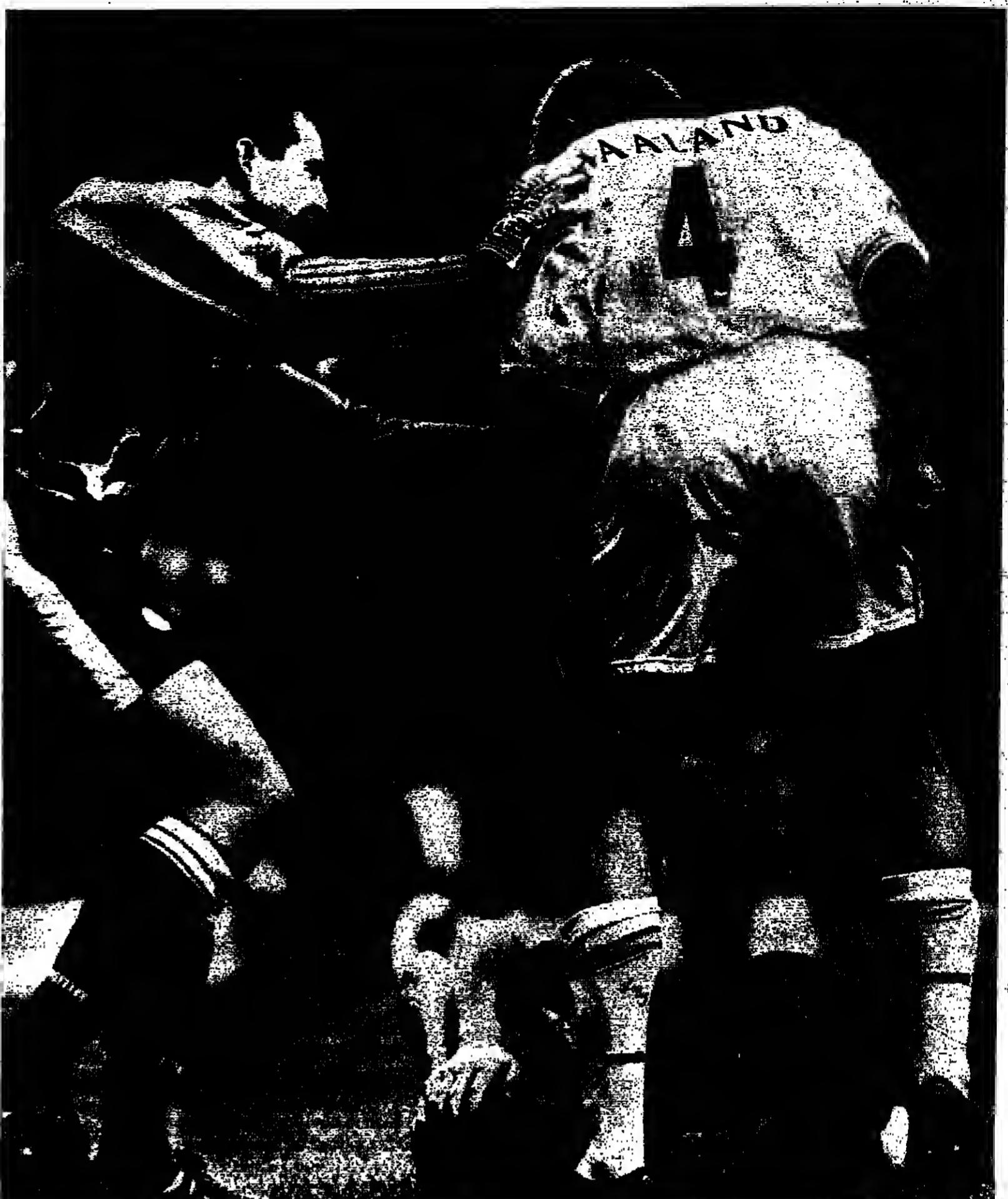
Bolton Wanderers yesterday

completed the club-record signing of the Wimbledon striker Dean Holdsworth for £3.5m. The 28-year-old had also been linked with West Ham and Middlesbrough, but he chose to go to the Reebok Stadium - which could mean Bolton allowing Peter Beardsley to join his former England colleagues, Ray Wilkins and Kevin Keegan, at Fulham.

Tottenham have ended their interest in the Bolton midfielder Alan Thompson as their injury crisis finally shows signs of ending. Among those returning to fitness is the England forward Darren Anderton, who is back in training and is set to start his latest comeback in the reserves next week.

Sheffield Wednesday have completed the £800,000 signing of the Norwegian international midfielder Petter Rudi from Molde. The 23-year-old has signed a three-and-a-half year contract at Hillsborough.

Ferguson frets, page 30  
Financial news, page 24



Nigel Martyn and Alf-Inge Haland, of Leeds United, stand over Roy Keane after the Manchester United captain suffered his cruciate ligament injury at Elland Road on Saturday. Keane will have an operation in the next month and will be out for the rest of the season. Photograph: Empics

**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

No 3428, Friday 3 October By Phil

**Thursday's solution**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			8	9		
10						
11			12			
13			14		15	
16			17		18	
19			20			
21			22			
23			24		25	

**ACROSS**

- 1 Pick's mostly to back frozen stuff (6)
- 4 Take ages to be pertinent (6)
- 10 Homework? Reacting to study badly (7, 8)
- 11 Suggest box should lose lid (5)
- 12 Unexpectedly appealing tip (9)
- 13 Cold: cold and mountainous (6)
- 15 Make start on course with first of tutors away (3, 3)
- 16 Bolt behind soft shrub (6)
- 18 Chesty upset - an indication of Death? (6)
- 21 Not honoured, not decorated, not invested (9)
- 22 Artist depicting common railway (5)
- 23 Interrupts rudely and causes ripples? (6, 4, 3, 2)
- 24 Guided to absorb information from story (6)
- 25 Might light appear as a distress signal? (6)

**DOWN**

- 1 Bats resident in time-piece? (6)
- 2 Not in contention, having no speed left? (3, 2, 3, 7)
- 3 Cleaner goes round one item of furniture (5)
- 5 It's accepted by English roughly in a knowledgeable way (9)
- 8 Half-heartedly tamper with last of cheery group of tunes (6)
- 9 For nobleman, Garter's foremost - fancy being upset about that! (6)
- 14 Symbol of affection is nothing to a man (4-5)
- 17 Young chap supporting workers' organisation in US city (6)
- 18 Chap shows the way walked oddly (6)
- 19 Shellfish or beef, we hear (6)
- 20 Dorothy, losing heart, carried by dearies, turning up in city in Oz (6)
- 22 Scrubber a twerp picked up (5) .

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### BOXING

#### Collins announces his retirement

Steve Collins, the World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight champion, yesterday announced his retirement from boxing. The Irishman, who had pulled out of his title defence against Joe Calzaghe which was due to take place in Sheffield on Saturday week, made the announcement at the British Boxing Awards ceremony in Bloomsbury, central London.

Collins, accepting the award for Best Overseas Boxer, said: "I don't have the motivation that I once had."

"My only way to carry on was to fight Roy Jones, the WBC (World Boxing Council) light heavyweight champion, but there is no chance of that happening now, the only route I have is to retire."

"As a super-middleweight, it was a very exciting time with the likes of Mike McCallum, Gerald McClellan, James Toney, Michael Watson, Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank."

"I believed I was the best of that group, and with my two world title wins over Benn and Eubank I proved it."

Collins, nicknamed "Celtic Warrior", added: "I would like to thank the British fans for supporting me and promoter Frank Warren, who gave me the chance to further my career, which sadly is now over."

Collins revealed that he had been considering retiring from boxing for a while before finally hanging up his gloves yesterday afternoon. The Irishman said: "It's something I've been thinking over in my mind for the best part of 12 months."

After announcing his decision to quit he told BBC Radio 5 Live: "If you continue in the game without hunger that's when people lose and get hurt."

"I'm quitting while I'm ahead and I'm happy to have achieved all my ambitions."

"The fight that would have kept me in boxing was against Roy Jones. But he has ducked me for two years, even though Frank Warren, my promoter, did everything to make it happen."

The British Boxing Board of Control secretary, John Morris, believes that the bout between Calzaghe and Collins's replacement, Eubank, will now be for the vacant WBO super-middleweight title - rather than for an interim title.

Following Collins's retirement the championship automatically becomes vacant and Eubank-Calzaghe, which was billed as an interim title fight, is expected to now be for the Irishman's belt.

Morris said: "Ultimately it is up to the WBO to make that decision but as far as I'm concerned, and we at the British Boxing Board of Control are concerned, Chris Eubank and Joe Calzaghe will fight for the vacant title."

#### The day when Atherton bowled over the French

Michael Atherton, the England captain, led an assortment of Test cricketers to an unlikely victory over the French.

Henry Blofeld, in Reims, witnessed the upset.

While it may not have been a victory to rank with those enjoyed by the England rugby union team at the Parc des Princes in recent years, a win over the French in any circumstances is a treasured moment for any English captain.

For Michael Atherton, whose successes overseas with his England cricketers have been rather limited, it must have been a very special occasion. Atherton was leading a

team of six England players past and present in a friendly match here. If it had been cricket, Atherton's side would no doubt have been favourites, but this was the quintessentially French sport of boules - and the host team included their national captain.

The match had been organised in aid of Atherton's benefit year. His team comprised Graham Gooch, Nasser Hussain, Mark Illott, John Stephenson and Derek Pringle, the *Independent's* cricket correspondent.

The outcome of a tight contest rested on a final throw by England's captain. Atherton walked up to the throwing line, his face marked by that characteristic nervous smile, and confidently delivered his final boule. It landed within three inches of the jack to earn his team a famous victory.

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